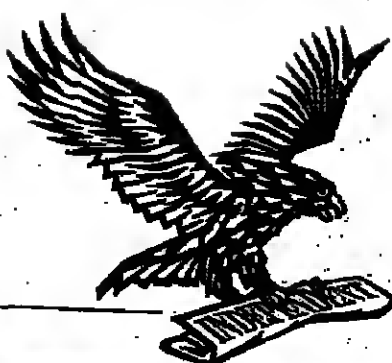


Power to the pedestrian

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The wives and times of Dudley Moore

Section Two



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MONDAY 17 JUNE 1996

WEATHER Hot and sunny; showers in Scotland and north of England 40p (UK 45p)

Manchester bomb blast raises a serious question about the peace process

If it isn't peace, is it war?

By David McKitterick

So what, after spilling the blood of all those shocked, bewildered, terrorised people on the streets of Manchester, does the IRA do for an encore? It is unlikely it will attempt to restart all-out war, though the bomb runs the risk of awakening the sleeping giant of loyalist paramilitarism.

Most likely it will either sit back now, or perhaps stage another attack or two in England and then desert for a while. It must figure that intermittent bombing attacks in England, at judicious intervals, concentrate British minds wonderfully.

It appears to believe that it is free to deliver its messages in two different ways: either via Sinn Féin, or in the form of explosive devices. The belief that Britain pays far more attention to the latter is etched deep in the republican psyche.

The best guess is that the message it sought to deliver on Saturday, drawn in blood on the streets of Manchester, is that it is not abandoning the idea of a peace process and still wants to talk. But it seems the talks which began in Belfast last week as being much too weighted towards a Unionist agenda, and wants much more far-reaching negotiations.

There are several causes for dismay in this. One is that the talks set-up, as negotiated between London and Dublin, represents by any objective criteria a reasonable basis for discussions, with all participants free to raise whatever they choose. In particular, the two governments agreed on an important political role for the former US Senator George Mitchell. This fulfilled one of Sinn Féin's strategic aims, which is to internationalise the problem and involve the United States as closely as possible in the Irish question.

A second cause for dismay is the apparent IRA belief that it



The scene of devastation in central Manchester yesterday which shows that only a pillar-box resisted the force of Saturday's blast

Photograph: Paul Barker/PA

can effect change to such arrangements through the placing of bombs which hurt Manchesterians. One unfortunate precedent which may well have encouraged this belief was the fact that the Government, in the aftermath of February's Docklands bombing, finally did what republicans demanded and set a date for the opening of talks. In vain has the Government denied that the bomb produced

the date: rightly or wrongly, the widespread assumption in Belfast is that in that instance violence paid off.

In the early 1980s the republicans developed the "Armalite and ballot-box" strategy, working on the theory of making advances through a carefully calculated blend of violence and politics. The IRA may now be reverting to this. But Sinn Féin, the other side of the re-

publican coin, knows that the day of that dual strategy is long since past. During the 1994-96 ceasefire Sinn Féin was highly successful in winning friends and influencing people, but all its new relationships were posited on the basis that the war was over. It was striking, in the wake of the Docklands bomb, to hear previously supportive American politicians, and celebrities, say they would give

no more help until the cessation was restored.

The Arndale Centre bomb inflicted much damage on Sinn Féin, moving it back towards its old parish status. The terms for its entry into political talks may well be made tougher. Arms decommissioning will move even further up the agenda.

In other words the bomb was not a complement to Sinn Féin's political efforts but a se-

vere setback for them. It has also sown much confusion in the republican movement as a whole, where supporters were this weekend having trouble working out the IRA's game plan. Any other organisation would at this point be splitting into two parts, howls and doves.

But there is an almost mystical relationship linking Sinn Féin and the IRA: anyone who thinks there is no connection be-

tween them is wrong; so too is anyone who believes there is no difference between them. The relationship is based on history, common experience, shared suffering and close family ties.

Both the militarists and the politicians, and the 40 shades in between, are keenly aware that separation could bring a bitter conflict which could set back the republican cause for a generation. A period of internal debate

and argument is therefore more likely than an outright split.

In any event, a split in which Adams led part of the movement into politics is highly unlikely to enhance the prospects of eventual peace. Figures and factions have walked away from the IRA periodically since the days of Eamon de Valera. Sometimes these defections caused momentary damage, but in each case the militaristic core left behind retained the capacity for violence.

The project pursued by Adams in recent years is an unprecedented one, in that it has been aimed at bringing the republican movement *en bloc* into politics. The prize was to include everyone, this time leaving no violent rump with the potential to start the killing all over again. His departure now would leave a freestanding IRA held back by fewer constraints. He would become just another despised mainstream politician with no influence over the IRA; and the logic of that is more bombs.

But even assuming there is to be no split, there must now be a period of outworking within the republican movement, since the Manchester bomb shows it to be an entity without a clear policy. The IRA is in charge and believes that bombing will help do the trick. Adams has a peace process strategy and has strong support among the wider movement, but evidently does not have his hands on the levers of power. Ahead lies a defining period, in which the military elite and the advocates of the peace process both dispute the future direction of their movement.

INSIDE

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Yeltsin on the edge after low turn-out

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin appeared to be pushing ahead in the Russian election despite a flurry of panic amongst his advisers over signs of a disappointingly low turn-out.

According to an exit poll by CNN, the Russian leader won 35 per cent of the vote, a commanding six-point lead over his Communist rival Gennady Zyuganov. Although figures are not yet confirmed the poll also showed a astonishing result by the popular General Alexander Lebed, an ally of the Kremlin's, whom the poll placed at 15 per cent. These initial figures will give heart to the President's campaign team, who issued a flurry of last-minute appeals to get the voters out.

From the exit poll it ap-

peared that Grigory Yavlinsky had won 9 per cent and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy 7 per cent, with other candidates gaining 4 per cent.

As the day unfolded, evidence had mounted that many Russians preferred to stay in the countryside or to watch the all-important Euro 96 football match between Germany and Russia. Matters were not helped, from Mr Yeltsin's viewpoint, by a humiliating three-nil defeat, which one Russian analyst said could "seriously demoralise" voters.

If neither Mr Yeltsin nor Mr Zyuganov gains an overall majority, the attention of both sides - and the world - will switch to the run-off in July. Mr Zyuganov, 51, has the advantage of loyal, active support, but many analysts doubt whether he can expand this sufficiently to



Delighted democrat: Boris Yeltsin and his wife Naina after voting in Moscow yesterday Photograph: Alexander Natruskin/Reuters

win the 50 per cent needed to get into the Kremlin.

Although he presents himself as a moderate progressive - more nationalist than Communist - his ultimate victory next

month would be regarded with horror in the West, not least because his close aides include notorious hardliners and anti-Westerners. Last night, there were rumblings from Washing-

ton that the West would block further aid to Russia if the course of free-market reforms were not continued.

The President's campaign team yesterday made no effort to conceal their disappointment over the turn-out, which seemed likely to be less than the 75 per cent they had hoped for. A low turn-out is considered to favour the Communist-nationalist coalition of Mr Zyuganov, who tend to vote come what may. Mr Yeltsin's support, whipped up from miserable ratings by a bombardment of publicity and promises of money, is much more like a soufflé - liable to collapse without warning.

If last night's early figures are borne out by events, Mr Yeltsin may have to bear some blame for this. His declaration last week that he would win outright may

have led some of his less enthusiastic supporters not to bother to turn out. Others may have chosen to vote for third-party candidates whom they prefer - such as General Lebed.

Such was the concern in the President's camp that the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, yesterday afternoon issued a statement to the official Itar-Tass news agency, appealing for voters to go to the polling booths. Several hours later this was followed by a press conference at Mr Yeltsin's campaign headquarters at which several top artists - including the renowned ballerina Yekaterina Maximova - begged their countrymen to vote, in words that, at times, made it blatantly clear that they were appealing on behalf of the Kremlin.

Further reports, pages 10 and 11

QUICKLY

Union 'fat cats'

The executive of Britain's biggest craft union have quietly awarded themselves massive severance packages potentially worth up to £500,000 each, the *Independent* has learned. Page 4

Grammar lessons

Children are learning grammar through foreign languages but not through their own, according to research published today. Page 7

Croatia in last eight

Croatia secured a place in the Euro 96 quarter-finals with a 3-0 win over Denmark in Sheffield, while Germany beat Russia, also 3-0, in Manchester, with two goals from Jürgen Klinsmann. Sports Section

Found: Joan of Arc's suit of armour

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

She was burnt at the stake in 1431. But, it is now claimed, her working wardrobe lives on. A Paris antiques dealer believes he has found the suit of armour in which Joan of Arc fought her epic battles, before the English bought her from the Burgundians and had her burnt as a witch.

When Pierre de Souza bought the suit, he thought he had merely acquired a set of old armour in unusually good condition. But the armour was also unusual in being very small. When Mr de Souza's 14-year-old daughter was allowed to try it on, it fitted her perfectly.

But Mr de Souza says that it

was only when his wife joked that their daughter looked just like Joan of Arc that the possibility occurred to him that it might have been made for the Maid of Orleans.

He then embarked on months of detective work - which revealed striking coincidences which might support the claims of authenticity. According to experts cited by France's main Sunday paper, the *Journal du Dimanche*, the metal has been dated to the 15th century.

Marks on the armour correspond to injuries Joan is known to have suffered during the siege of Orleans in 1429, and subsequently near Paris.

The possibilities that the armour was made for a child or an-

other female warrior have been rejected. Jean-Pierre Duchiron, an armour expert, said he is "practically sure" that the armour was Joan's. But the curator of France's army museum is sceptical. One opposing piece of evidence is that Joan wore a helmet with a moveable visor; Mr de Souza's armour is visorless.

He bought the suit from an elderly woman, whose ancestor bought it in Britain in 1780. Joan of Arc's armour vanished after she was taken prisoner near Compiègne on 23 May 1431. But even if the armour eventually proves to be Joan's, Mr de Souza's problems may not be at an end. He fears that the armour would become priceless, as a French national relic - and therefore, perhaps, unsellable.



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THE MANCHESTER BOMBING



John Major "This explosion looks like the work of the IRA. It is the work of a few fanatics and causes absolute revulsion in Ireland as it does here."

Gerry Adams "This is a time for everyone committed to the objective of lasting peace in Ireland to dig deep and apply ourselves with greater determination to restore the peace process."

John Bruton "This is a slap in the face to people who've been trying against perhaps their better instincts, to give Sinn Fein a chance to show that they could persuade the IRA to reinstate the ceasefire."

John Hume "Acts of this nature create terrible suffering for the victims and shock for everyone."

The Rev Ian Paisley "This is a devilish action ... if that is the attitude of the people who want to be at the democratic negotiating table, I would say they have no place at that table."

David Trimble "Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness were members of Sinn Fein/IRA, he said, and that while they are part of that organisation they have to accept responsibility for what their organisation does."

London and Dublin unite against Sinn Fein

COLIN BROWN and DAVID MCKITTRICK

The Irish and British Governments moved quickly in the wake of the Manchester bomb to avoid any attempt by Sinn Fein to split the two governments over their approach to a ceasefire declaration.

They both made it clear the bombing had made it more difficult for Sinn Fein to be admitted to talks.

Evidence of a hardening of opinion came yesterday from the Taoiseach, John Bruton, who criticised Sinn Fein for being "struck mute" after the bombing, and for refusing to condemn the recent killing of Garda detective in Limerick.

Mr Bruton said: "What is needed now is an unconditional and irrevocable ceasefire. There can be no going back this time, no looking back over the shoulder to the option of violence if politics doesn't go their way. This time they must come irrevocably into the political process."

Andrew Hunter, the chairman of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland committee, said the bombing made Sinn Fein's exclusion from the talks "absolute" for the foreseeable future. "I would not be at all surprised if there was not some ceasefire statement during the next few days that would throw confusion and sow dissent among the negotiators."

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, warned: "No one is going to be taken in. You can't have a situation in which there's a bomb in Manchester on Saturday and the announcement of a ceasefire on Monday and people allowed back into talks on Tuesday. The real world isn't like that."

Some Tory MPs warned that the IRA should begin decommissioning weapons before Sinn Fein is admitted, a view not shared by the governments.

There were Tory calls for interment of the "Godfathers" of the IRA, but British ministers said it was a "last resort".

The security forces will also be watching for any sign of possible loyalist retaliation, although David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist party, which is close to the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force, said he believed the loyalist ceasefires would hold.

The Irish Government will tomorrow review its continuing contacts with Sinn Fein in the wake of the bombing and the killing of the Garda special branch officer in Adare. It is unlikely that the Irish Government will break off contact with Sinn Fein, according to highly placed Irish sources, but the review could prove historic.

Both acts by the IRA were condemned yesterday by Mr Bruton and Dick Spring, the Irish Foreign Minister, but the murder of the Garda officer has shocked Dublin. Mr Spring said on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*: "British ministers believe the bombing may mean the leadership of the IRA has split."

"The Adare killing was carried out by a breakaway group from the IRA. That leaves us facing a new difficulty. We always felt we were dealing with a leadership, people who were trying to bring the IRA into democratic politics. The situation could be very different, that we don't know who we are dealing with," Mr Spring said on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*.

British ministers believe the only hope for peace now is that the IRA's bombing of Manchester will alienate the Nationalists who voted for Sinn Fein in the Northern Ireland elections. Mr Bruton said the voters had been "betrayed" by the IRA.

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, said the attack meant his party would keep demands for an IRA weapons surrender as top of their agenda in talks that enter their second week in Belfast today.

Device was 'as big as anything to hit mainland Britain'

JAMES CUSICK

Police believe the bomb in Manchester may be the largest yet planted by the IRA in Britain.

Anti-terrorist officers from London and forensic scientists were yesterday sifting through the wreckage left by the blast. Judging by the distance that some of the debris travelled, officers think the bomb was at least as large as the device which devastated the South Quay area of London's Docklands in February and possibly even bigger.

Last night police said the van used in the bombing had been spotted in Peterborough on Friday afternoon.

Crucial to their investigation is the belief that somewhere among the hours of closed-circuit video tapes gathered by cameras in the area is photographic evidence of who was driving the white and orange Ford Corgi van. Police evaluating the security tapes last night appealed to business premises with cameras covering arterial routes into Greater Manchester to keep tapes and contact them. Although police released a photograph of the van - registration C214 ACL, parked in Corporation Street, where it finally exploded - it is still not known at what precise time the vehicle was parked.

The orange cab of the seven-and-a-half-ton vehicle was marked with the logo Jack Roberts Transport. Greater Manchester Police confirmed yesterday that the vehicle had been stolen.

The first full picture of what lies before the authorities in their attempt to return Manchester city centre back to normal began to emerge yesterday. Journalists were allowed the first access to the site of the explosion. Accompanying the media was the Greater Manchester

Assistant Chief Constable, Colin Phillips, who said: "It was a miracle that no one was killed. The force of the blast seems to have gone round corners and over the top of buildings."

Walking along what looked like a carpet of broken glass and debris from shattered buildings, Mr Phillips added: "This is all absolutely devastating and it is a great tragedy to see Manchester like this."

He reinforced the opinion that the scale of the Manchester bomb was "as large as anything to hit mainland Britain". For those who witnessed the

IRA's biggest bombs

- April 1996 - Hammer-smith Bridge - 30th semtex, failed to explode
- February 1996 - London's Docklands - 2,240lb of fertilizer and semtex, killed two people
- April 1993 - Bishopsgate - 2,240lb of fertilizer, killed one man
- April 1992 - Baltic Exchange - 100lb of fertilizer, detonated by a small quantity of semtex, killed three people
- November 1990 - Armaghmartin, Co Fermanagh - 3,500lb fertilizer, failed to explode
- November 1990 - Stoke Newington - 2,000lb fertilizer, failed to explode

devastation of the IRA's attack on South Quay, the Manchester blast appeared to have similar consequences: buildings torn to shreds as though made of papier mâché instead of concrete; water pouring out of twisted structures as though they had been crushed; holes pockmarked over building facades as though teams of demolition men had been trying to knock them down.

Mr Phillips described the at-



Security stepped up as fears grow over attacks

COLIN BROWN

Security was stepped up around senior Conservative ministers and backbenchers before the Manchester bomb blast, following intelligence reports that the IRA might be planning a renewed attack on the mainland.

One prominent Conservative backbencher told *The Independent* that the authorities believed the IRA could be planning a political assassination, after the refusal of the British and Westminster Governments to admit Sinn Fein leaders to the cross-party talks.

The security alert was tightened around some key targets whose names were discovered in the south London flat occupied by Edmund O'Brien, the IRA man blown up by his own bomb on a London bus.

The intelligence services in Northern Ireland have issued warnings about the general level of the threat from the IRA. But the failure to intercept the bombers whose Ford van, attracted a parking ticket two hours before it exploded, will raise questions again about the difficulty of cracking the cell network of the IRA network.

Ministers dismissed as "speculation" reports that there were three IRA active service units operating on the mainland, two in London and one touring the rest of the country.

But one senior minister said it had become clear that the IRA were improving their arsenal during the ceasefire when it was discovered that they had enhanced their mortar capability. Make-shift mortars were used in the attack on Downing Street. Now, the IRA are believed to possess mortars that can throw devices further and with greater accuracy.

The Manchester bombing was the seventh attack in mainland Britain since the ending of the ceasefire. The attempt in April to blow up Hammer-smith Bridge with the biggest

Semtex bomb found in this country, failed when the detonator did not ignite.

Northern Ireland ministers met informally at Westminster last Thursday to review progress in the cross-party talks. It was agreed that in spite of the rows, including the controversy over former US Senator George Mitchell chairing the key hearings, the talks were on track.

The Mitchell report, calling for "mutual" decommissioning, will be used to address the issue of Loyalist paramilitary weapons, in the absence of Sinn Fein at the negotiating table. "There will not be a bonfire of weapons unless there is a double bonfire, with the IRA's weapons there too," said one Tory source.

Ministers reportedly had been ready to admit Sinn Fein to the talks had the IRA announced another ceasefire. But all the manoeuvring, some observers say, has been rendered academic by the Manchester bomb.

Tensions within Sinn Fein have prompted a call for a special conference over the party leadership's acceptance of the Mitchell principles.

Concern at the move among sections of the republican movement is believed to be fuelled by fears that it could lead to acceptance of an internal settlement in Northern Ireland.

The principles require acceptance of verified disarmament, renouncing the use of force, and agreeing to abide by any agreement reached in all-party negotiations.

Sinn Fein headquarters has denied that the conference move, led by Cork members, bearded a challenge to the leadership of Gerry Adams.

One newspaper claimed there had been threats of resignations over the issue from both long-standing Sinn Fein activists and from "middle-ranking" IRA members.

The Cork anger was apparently driven by the belief that Sinn Fein had initially declined to endorse the Mitchell principles when published in January.

It is understood the Cork members cite the party's submission to the Mitchell decommissioning body which insisted Sinn Fein would reject any British pre-conditions to all-party talks.

James McBarron, a spokesman for the Cork Sinn Fein constituency organisation, declined to elaborate on the reasons for the conference move. The Sinn Fein constitution allows for an extraordinary conference if the move has the support of one third of the party's local branches.

A Sinn Fein leadership source said yesterday was doubtful of the chances of the Cork letter raising support required. She suggested the move was not representative of the party's mainstream thinking, but did not rule out further "internal meetings".

Talks deal exposes republican tension

ALAN MURDOCH

Dublin

Tensions within Sinn Fein have prompted a call for a special conference over the party leadership's acceptance of the Mitchell principles.

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THE MANCHESTER BOMBING

'They are crazy... they tried to kill me and my baby'

MICHAEL STREETER

A heavily pregnant woman described yesterday how she was knocked off her feet by the Manchester bomb as she was shopping for her new baby.

Melanie Russell, 23, was close to tears as she said: "They tried to kill me and they tried to kill my baby. I heard it go off and I felt a blast. It knocked me flying and I blanked out and came round 45 minutes later in the ambulance." She added: "I was more worried about the baby than anything - I could not feel her moving."

But although doctors at the Manchester Royal Infirmary considered carrying out an emergency Caesarean operation, extensive tests shows that the unborn child was not harmed. Yesterday Mrs Russell, who spent the night in St Mary's Hospital, was allowed to return to her home in Heywood, Rochdale. The child is due in about two weeks.

Ms Russell, who had been on a shopping trip with her mother, Lynda, described the terrorists as "crazy and pathetic". "Innocent people have got hurt," she said.

Her mother, who said that they had both been knocked against a concrete pillar which

sheltered them from flying glass, praised two shop workers who had taken care of her unconscious daughter while the ambulance took 45 minutes to get through police cordons. But she questioned how she and her daughter were allowed to be in an area so close to the blast.

She said they had been warned not to go near the Arndale Centre and had just come out of a shop near Oldham Street when the explosion occurred. "We were about two to three blocks from the lorry. I'm annoyed that we were allowed to be as close as that."

Describing the moment the bomb went off she said: "I heard the sound of glass smashing and people screaming."

Meanwhile, a consultant surgeon at the North Manchester General Hospital said that one of the victims had received some of the worst facial injuries he had seen in 19 years. Mr Peter White said the 42-year-old woman needed up to 300 stitches after a piece of glass had sliced into her forehead "like a knife through butter".

Mr White said she had had seven hours of emergency surgery which had been like "putting a jig-saw back together". He said it was the type of injury he used to see in pre-seat belt

days when car passengers were thrown through windcreens.

He told a press conference yesterday: "Since I have been at North Manchester it is one of the most severe facial lacerations I have encountered." He said the woman, of Lancashire, would be scarred for life. She also lost four teeth, suffered cuts to her lips, arms and right leg and an injury to her right eye - though the sight was not affected. Surgeons removed 30 slivers of glass from her body.

Mr White said the woman, who was married, would probably receive counselling to cope with her disfigurement, which could mask by surgery and make-up but not removed.

"Relationships and talking to people are going to be difficult for her. She will need a lot of support," he said, adding that he did not feel she was aware of the full impact of what had happened.

Another woman, 24, needed a three-hour operation after flying glass sliced open her forehead. Mr White said both patients were lucky to be alive and he was surprised there were no deaths given the scale of the explosion. Out of 79 people admitted on Saturday to the North Manchester General just 8 were detained yesterday.



Safe: Melanie Russell, whose baby is due in two weeks, in hospital with her boyfriend, Michael Kilpatrick, yesterday

Photograph: Chris Gleave

The Duchess of Kent, who was in the area for another engagement, visited staff and the injured at the hospital yesterday and praised the courage of all those involved. She told an impromptu press conference:

"Some of them [the patients] are obviously frightened and think they are in the middle of a nightmare and are going to wake up from it."

Describing Saturday as a "horrid" day for the North, the

Duchess praised the professionalism of all the emergency services involved. Those injured in the bomb had either been out shopping or carrying out their work when the unexpected had happened, she said.

Another victim, Fiona McGill, 23, was discharged from the same hospital. She had received minor cuts to her legs. Ms McGill, who was on a visit to the city from Dublin, said: "I heard the bomb and

then a shower of glass came down simultaneously. People were running away and everyone was hysterical. These people [who did this] may be Irish but I feel quite ashamed about what happened."

City shows its defiance by throwing Euro 96 party

JAMES CUSICK, MICHAEL STREETER and JOJO MOYES

The doors of Manchester's Anglican Cathedral, 200 yards from the scene of the IRA bomb, were closed yesterday for the first time since the Blitz. And the city's normally bustling commercial centre was silent as forensic squads probed the remains of the destruction.

But Manchester showed its defiance by throwing its latest Euro 96 football party. Fans from Germany, Russia, Britain and the rest of Europe flooded

into the Old Trafford stadium in sweltering sunshine. Shirts from clubs around the world were in evidence, and police reported no arrests before the match and a typically good-natured and carefree atmosphere which has become the hallmark of the competition.

Visitors were undeterred by the terrorist menace, determined that nothing would interfere with their enjoyment of the football fiesta. Joachim Braun, from Monheim, Germany, said: "I had to phone my mother to say I was OK. She was

very frightened and anxious when she heard about the bomb. But it is good to be here. I love football and I wouldn't let something like that stop me coming here."

Clemens Voegele and Bernhard Fritz, from Konstanz, southern Germany, arrived in Manchester today hours before the game at the start of a 10-day visit to the championship. "We heard about the bomb before we left home. Our family did not want us to come but we were not scared," said Mr Voegele.

Away from the grounds, the security ring thrown up by police was still in force, with officers turning away curious pedestrians. The inner "sterile" area, which was closest to the blast, will not reopen until early next week, police said.

The City Council set up a desk to advise shopkeepers on clearing up and reopening. They issued a number - 0161-234-1748 - and told keyholders to report to the Lloyd Street entrance of Manchester Town Hall in Albert Square.

In the Town Hall in chambers

and lobbies normally busy running the city, there was instead the matter of returning to normal life. There were two groups: those worried about their businesses and those worried about their homes. Most of the talk in the aftermath of the attack has been about the destruction of the city centre's shops and offices. However, there is a large residential population worried that the IRA has destroyed not just the hopes of peace in Northern Ireland but the homes of innocent people.

Although the Arndale is

primarily a retail complex, on its roof there are 60 flats and a large area of rooftop landscaped gardens. On Saturday morning helicopters with loud hailer warned residents of the flats to evacuate their homes immediately. Father and son Michael and Damon Butterworth left their house "within 20 minutes". They spent Saturday night at hotel and conference facilities belonging to the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Last night they were there again, awaiting news of

when, if ever, they will be allowed home.

Michael Butterworth said: "We really enjoy living there and we hope we will be allowed to go back. It's the nicest place I've ever lived - the gardens are wonderful and it's special." His teenage son was mainly concerned for his two cats, Sony and Marmalade. "The authorities don't seem to care; they think it's just two cats but if I'm not allowed to go back soon, they'll be dead. They're dealing with all the tourists and businesses first. Then us. It's all wrong."

Engineers were checking buildings throughout the city in an attempt to clear them for re-occupation and allow businesses back in.

Meanwhile, Russian and German visitors in the city for the Euro 96 championship, unable to return to their crowded-off hotel since Saturday afternoon, were pragmatic.

Boris Khousainov from Siberia, sitting in front of a beer advert urging "drink for England" said: "England is a good country - this [the bomb] is a little problem."



Welcome sign: A multi-lingual greeting to Euro 96 fans amid the rubble yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Insurers' bill may top £200m and push up 'pool' premiums

NIC CICUTTI

Insurers will face claims of up to £200m to help pay for the damage inflicted by the bomb blast, a leading insurance assessor claimed yesterday.

Up to one-third of shops and offices affected by the explosion may receive only limited compensation because they did not have the insurance cover needed in the event of terrorist attack.

Meanwhile, businesses throughout Britain may be called on to pay a levy of at least £100m in extra insurance premiums in Pool Re, the Government-backed re-insurer set up in the aftermath of the 1992 Baltic Exchange bombing in the City of London.

Alan James, associate director of Harris Claims Group, a firm of assessors, said: "The effect could be absolutely devastating. It could be disastrous for the small-business community. It may indeed force some out of business."

Some of those worst affected by damage and loss of business may never re-open, while hundreds of jobs may be lost as

insurers demand that even shopkeepers with cover "mitigate their losses".

Details of the heavy costs to be borne by Britain's businesses came as police investigators and insurance assessors both began their separate tasks of sifting through the rubble of Saturday's explosion near the Arndale Centre, Manchester's shopping mall.

More than 400 businesses could be affected in a half-mile radius of the city centre, while many more outside that area suffered smashed windows and damaged fittings.

Alan Harris, chief executive of Harris Claims Group, said 20 of his staff were now in Manchester to assess the damage. "It is hard to say exactly how much the cost will come to, but it may amount to £100m for rebuilding costs and for fixtures and fittings," he said. "Business interruption may come to that amount again."

"You have to remember that a lot of shops, hotels, clubs and restaurants had been geared up for the Euro 96 games at Old Trafford."

Unlike the most recent large

blast, at Docklands in London, where damage is being estimated at £150m, this time it is mainly shops that have been affected.

"If you are dealing with offices, it is possible to move staff into new premises which prevents too much interruption. With shops, that is not so easy," Mr Harris said.

He added that serious problems could arise where a business decided in the aftermath of the IRA's ceasefire in August 1994 that special terrorism insurance was no longer needed.

The extra premiums are collected by all UK insurers and passed on to Pool Re, which then meets claims against it. Without this cover, which can cost thousands of pounds, any compensation for a terrorist attack is limited to a maximum £100,000 each for structural damage, replacing stock and business interruption. Up to a third of the damage caused in the Docklands blast was not claimable because the owners of buildings had not paid into Pool Re.

"Even if you do have the Pool

Re cover, it may not be possible to hold on to your staff because you have a duty to the insurer to 'mitigate your losses'," Mr Harris said. "A restaurant owner could argue that it is vital to keep paying a chef's wages because he is an essential employee. But he may not be able to keep the waiters."

Tony Baker, deputy director general at the Association of British Insurers, the industry's trade body, said many thousands of businesses insured through Pool Re will also face an immediate levy.

After the IRA ceasefire, Pool Re agreed to charge only 60 per cent of annual premiums unless terrorist-inspired claims reached more than £75m a year. Although the levy has not yet been announced, the Isle of Dogs blast alone caused more than that amount of damage. Saturday's explosion is certain to lead insurers to demand the remaining 40 per cent from their clients, Mr Baker said.

One insurance source said that while the exact figure is not known "for security reasons", it could easily reach £100m.

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Union officials grab £500,000 'golden goodbye'

Mr Jackson said that details would be published soon in the annual report. The idea was to reduce the executive before holding fresh elections. There was no intention to keep the arrangement quiet.

"Details are going to be published as soon as the auditor has approved the annual report," he said. Mr Jackson added that the union would save "millions of pounds" on office costs and expenses by reducing the 22-strong executive to 9.

In an honesty test set up by Reader's Digest magazine, which dropped 80 wallets containing £30 in towns and cities, Glasgow and Leamington Spa in Warwickshire tied as the most honest communities, while people in Cardiff were more likely to take the money and run. Overall, 65 per cent of the wallets were handed in, eight out of ten in Glasgow and Leamington Spa and only four in Cardiff. Women were more honest than men – of 32 who found wallets, 23 handed them in, while only nine out of 48 men did so.

a constructive role "at the centre of Europe" and he attacked the anti-German propaganda over the beef war as "wrong and unhelpful".

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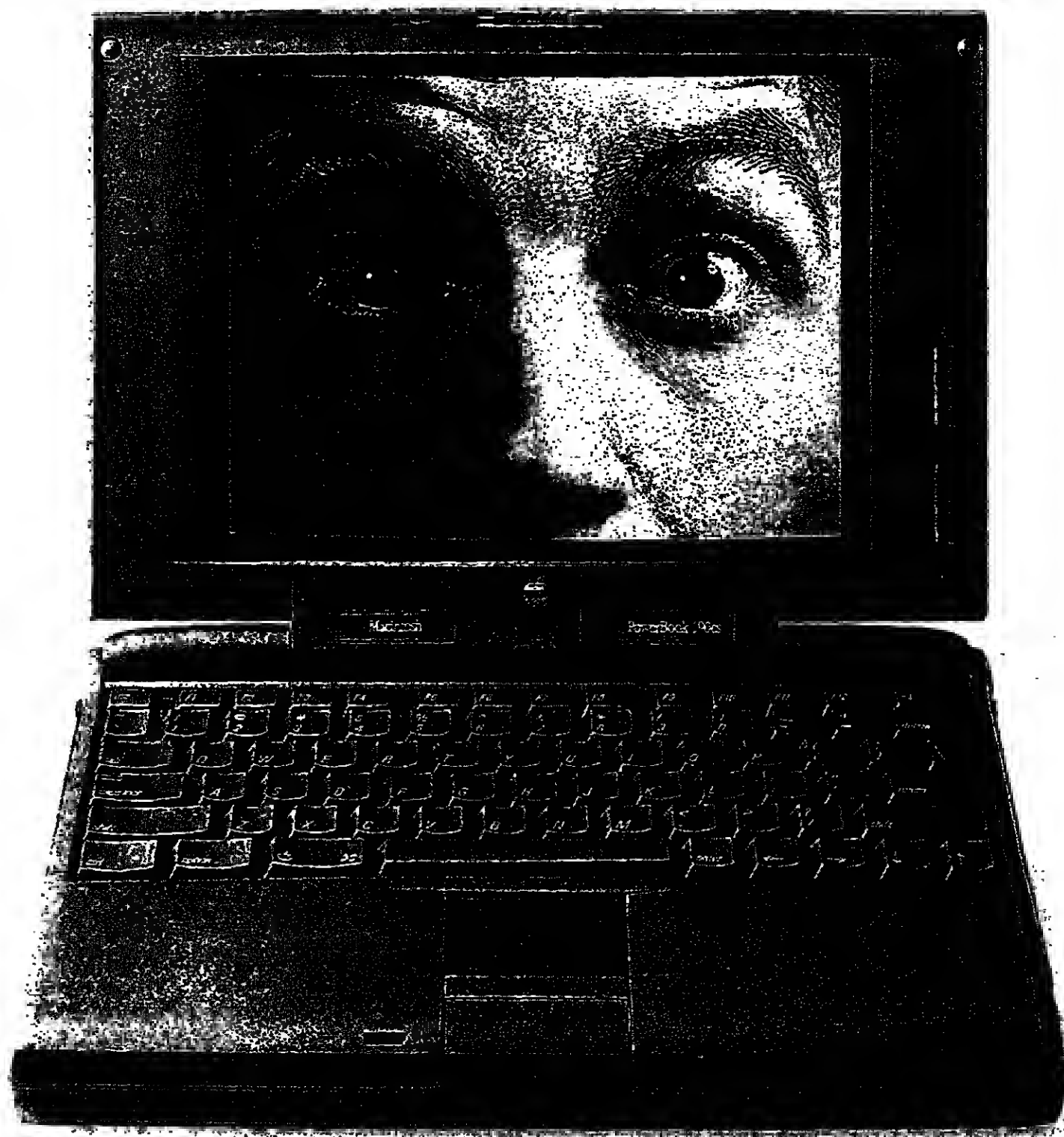
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Teaching of English fails grammar test

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Children are learning grammar through foreign languages but not through their own, according to research published today.

Most 13- and 14-year-olds have heard of nouns and verbs but do not really know what they are, says the study from Southampton University, part of a five-year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

They are getting mixed messages about grammar, with modern language teachers emphasising its formal teaching while English teachers encourage children to learn grammar by using the language.

Professor Martin Hughes, the research programme's co-ordinator, said: "It's ironic. If you want to learn about your own language you need to learn another."

Professor Christopher Brumfit and Dr Rosamond Mitchell, the study's directors, spent a

year analysing dozens of lessons by seven teachers in three schools. They also assessed children to discover how much they knew about language.

While foreign language teachers taught grammar in a traditional way, concentrating on individual sentences and words, English teachers tended to teach about whole texts and were more interested in style and genre than grammar.

The study found that there was very little formal grammar teaching in English lessons.

Teachers often do not know enough about language to teach it properly, they concluded.

Dr Mitchell said pupils learned basic definitions of nouns in primary school but that was not developed. We needed to be more systematic about language teaching and teachers needed to be told what pupils of a particular age should understand about grammar.

"Most teachers do imaginative things about language but in a very patchy way."

Professor Hughes, of Exeter

University, said: "Pupils' limited understanding of their own language is a serious cause for concern."

He said it highlighted the problem of the division of the national curriculum into individual subjects. "What children are learning in one subject may be related in no way to what they are learning in another."

Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said the research suffered from confusion about what the word

"grammar" meant. "It means the ability to construct a sentence so that the meaning is clear. It can also be used as a system which provides a short cut to learning a foreign language. The two have very little in common."

"Of course children learn to give names to parts of sentences to learn a foreign language but that isn't something you particularly need when you are speaking and writing your own language."

Professor Hughes' research

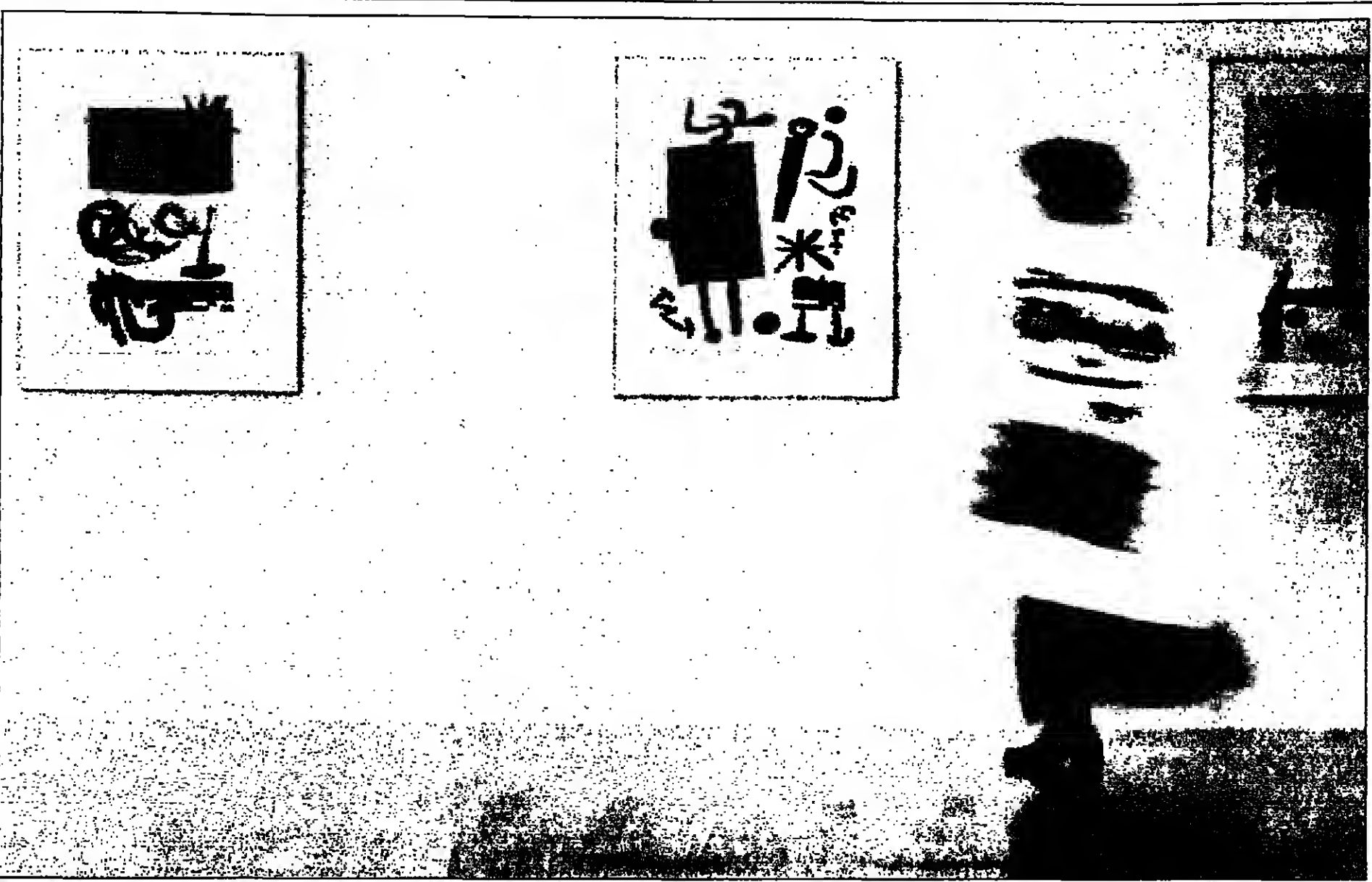
programme looked at the nationwide impact of government changes on the education of pupils aged 5 to 16.

Another study, from the Thomas Coram Research Unit in London, found that, over the last 10 years, the time spent by schools on the basics of English, maths and science had changed little despite the introduction of the national curriculum.

Some experts have suggested that the nine-subject curriculum in primary schools has squeezed the basics.

Researchers found that the time teachers spent hearing each child read every week had not changed at all since the mid-Eighties. Then and now, it was just eight minutes.

However, young children's school days have become more academic. There is more science and less art and craft than a decade ago. The report says the amount of time children spend reading is worryingly low: it is vital that schools involve parents to ensure that all children read at home as well as at school.



Surrealist feast: Final hanging for the 'Joan Miro, Printmaker 1933-63' exhibition which opens at the Tate Gallery Liverpool tomorrow. The prints, from the Joan Miro Foundation in Barcelona, highlight the development of the artist's imagery from the figurative to the gestural. Photograph: Craig Easton

Europe air fare wars take off

MICHAEL STREETER

A new price battle of the air will start this week as another low-cost airline opens, offering cheap fares in return for no-frills service.

Debonair, based at Luton Airport, is providing free tickets for its opening flights on Thursday to Munich, Düsseldorf and Barcelona. After that a typical one-way fare to Germany will cost £39 and one-way to Barcelona just £47.

Their services are part of an unprecedented era of cheap travel for Britons eager to leave the country. EasyJet, a cut-price airline at Luton, has just extended its services to Nice and Barcelona.

And Le Shuttle train services are publicising £49 day return fares to the Continent, with some tickets costing only £19 if a passenger wants to slip across the Channel after 2pm - providing they are back by midnight.

Debonair is run by chairman and chief executive Franco

Mancasola, who has persuaded 500 investors from all over Europe to back his new venture.

As with EasyJet, Debonair aims to reduce costs by providing no hot meals on board its flights, and by selling tickets direct to the public; though unlike its close rivals it will also be selling flights through travel agents. Its Whispert jets will be one class.

The vice-president of marketing, Barry Zorn, said Debonair was not aiming to take part in an air price war. "We are not thinking about that at all, our concept is just to offer affordable travel. Perhaps people who have never flown before will be attracted by what we have to offer."

News of the cheaper air fares this summer were hailed by consumer groups. Kim Winter, acting deputy editor of *Holiday Which?* said: "I think generally this is good news for the consumer - as long as people realise that in terms of service they will get what they pay for."

Use this voucher to try our Summer of Sport midweek supplement giving all the news and background, this Wednesday

Water firms confident of defying the lack of rain

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Rainfall continues to be way below average. The rivers are running low and slow, and the underground water table levels have sunk far below normal levels. But the water companies remain confident of getting through the summer without any severe restrictions.

Since February last year,

there has been rainfall above the long-term average for just three months over England and Wales as a whole - in September, December and this February. November had exactly the average and every other month has had below the mean.

A dry June is following a dry April and May. So, with such shortfalls, and after last summer's widespread drought, why no severe shortages and water

restrictions this year?

Because since late last summer the worst-affected water companies have carried out emergency engineering works and taken extra water from rivers and boreholes to avoid the kind of public relations disaster that engulfed Yorkshire Water - which, at one point, was threatening to cut off entire cities for 24 hours at a stretch.

The water companies' total investment in boosting supplies, opening pinch-points and improving connections and flexibility in their limited regional grids has run to £250m, according to the Water Services

Association, which represents nine of the "big ten" regional companies.

They have also accelerated their work on cutting mains leakage, which was embarrassingly high for several companies.

But this extra speeding is small beer compared to their existing commitments on renewing freshwater and sewer mains and improving drinking water and sewage treatment works. The companies are not being allowed to raise their bills to pay for the extra work. And the experience has demonstrated how earlier shortages could have been avoided.

None the less, the small water companies, South East and Folkestone and Dover, and four of the big ten - Yorkshire, North West, Southern and South West - have hosepipe and sprinkler bans covering a part or all of their areas.

Yorkshire also has "non essential" use bans covering millions of its customers in Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Barnsley, Harrogate and other nearby towns. These bans restrict car washes which do not recycle water, and the watering of sports grounds, parks and cemeteries.

The Government's Environ-

ment Agency says groundwater levels are below average across England and Wales, and at an all-time low near Brighton and north Kent.

Of 35 main rivers monitored, 18 have been found to be running below average, and 6 to have less than half the average flow for this time of year. But 11 are flowing at above the average speed.

The Environment Agency says that South West customers served by Devon's large Roadford reservoir - now just under half full - will face restrictions unless there is some decent rainfall soon.

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news

One of Britain's richest families proposes massive increases for tenants in crumbling Hackney block



Room for improvement: A tenant in one of the Pears' flats without a bath

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

No bathroom, but rent rises by 300 per cent

CHRIS BLACKHURST

When one of the tenants in Graham Mansions, Hackney, in the East End of London, wants a bath, he takes the train to his sister's, two stops away. When the Pears family in Hampstead and Tottenham, north London, need a bath, they can choose from any of the numerous bathrooms in their palatial houses.

Graham Mansions, a crumbling Edwardian block on a main road, is owned by the Pearses, one of Britain's richest families with a fortune estimated at £200m. Clarice Pears, 62, who heads the family, is the fourth wealthiest woman in Britain.

The Pearses have just hit their tenants with rent increases of up to 300 per cent, as much as £500 per month in some cases for flats without bathrooms.

Mostly pensioners and the long-term unemployed, many of the 80 tenants live in the conditions of a bygone age. Apart from not having bathrooms – the ones that have them have put them in themselves – they contend with crumbling brickwork, open drains, rotten window frames and gaping cracks in the exterior walls.

In a flat close to the man who takes the train to his sister's for a bath lives an 80-year-old pensioner. He has no bathroom and has received a demand for rent of £500 per month, up from £125.

Like many tenants in Graham Mansions, his rent is paid by Hackney Housing Benefit. "Under section 604 of the Housing Act some would qualify as unfit for human habitation," said a Hackney council press officer. Although the

council pays the housing benefit, she said it could not enforce the installation of bathrooms.

Graham Mansions was bought by St Ermins Property Company in 1988. The block is managed by McDowells, a firm of chartered surveyors. Geoffrey Haig, of McDowells, refused to say who owned St Ermins. But a check at Companies House revealed it is part of the Pears family empire.

Every share in the company belongs to the Pearses. Last year St Ermins, which has four directors, Clarice, Mark, Stephen and David Pears, made profits of £2.2m. The Pears' main company, William Pears Family Holdings, has assets of £122m and last year made profits of £9.7m. The four directors of the holding company were each paid £350,000. The companies own properties across London. Their head office is in a Hampstead house, close to the family's gracious homes. The family does not court publicity.

Under the terms of Graham Mansions' leases, the landlord is responsible, for external repairs and maintenance.

Tenants have objected to the proposed rent increases, sending a list of grievances to the local Rent Officer. They include sub-

sidence, causing cracks and rising floors, poor electrical wiring, dangerous windows, rotten silk, communal staircases that are wooden and could be a fire risk, leaking sewage, smelly drains and plumbing that overflows into the garden.

As flats fall vacant, they are being refurbished and bathrooms are being installed. One tenant, who did not want to be named, claimed in a letter to the Rent Officer that the proposed £500 figure "is being based on empty flats that have been completely gutted and refurbished with the benefit of bathrooms, fitted kitchens, central heating and carpeting, throughout, and which I consider grossly unfair."

Two years ago St Ermins applied to have the rents increased to £300 per month, up from £80. The tenants appealed and after visiting the flats, the Rent Assessment Committee settled on £110.50. The committee said the block was "in a state of obvious disrepair".

At the Pears company headquarters last Friday, a woman said that none of the family was there. Asked if they would talk about Graham Mansions, she said: "You need to write in, unfortunately. They won't take calls directly."

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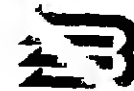
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By Joanne Burns

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men in suits who have dry handshakes in heatwaves
men in suits whose perfect wives are no less perfect in heatwaves
men in suits who would read any rand, omni, fortune etc to
optimize those periods of insomnia that may occur
in heatwaves
sons of men in suits flamboyantly confident in designer shorts in heatwaves
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Inside Burma: The whirling spy cameras at Aung San Suu Kyi's rallies no longer frighten the democracy leader's supporters

Junta's foes overcome fear of prying eyes

THOMAS CALEB
Rangoon

The secret police at Aung San Suu Kyi's weekend democracy rallies are easy to spot. With cameras and video whirling, they elbow through the crowd and focus their lenses, not on the Burmese opposition leader, but on every face.

The cruel eye of the secret police often fixes on a round-cheeked lady in her sixties sitting demurely with her umbrella and her tiffin on a newspaper spread over the muddy ground.

She always sits as near as she can to the picket fence, where Aung San Suu Kyi comes to speak. The lady has a spray of jasmine in her silver hair and is always smiling. No matter how intrusively the police jam their cameras into her face, the lady never loses her calm smile. She does not flinch.

Is she afraid of the military regime? Most Burmese with good sense are. Her reply is emphatic: "No! Let them arrest me. I want them to know I want democracy," she said. The lady always arrives three hours before Ms Suu Kyi appears at the fence, and is often caught in a monsoon deluge that rips away her umbrella. Ms Suu Kyi has rushed through the downpour and pleaded with the lady to come into her house until the rally starts. But the smiling lady refuses. It was enough for her to hear Ms Suu Kyi speak of democracy.

The thousands who gather outside the Nobel Peace Prize winner's house beside a lake are ordinary people. They are not martyrs or militants. They are office workers or teachers who feel guilty after being compelled by the military state to sign official denunciations of "foreign stooges" - meaning Ms Suu Kyi. Had they refused, they would lose their jobs and houses. They are young Buddhist monks, squatting under jacaranda trees, who are saddened that the junta has bought off the abbots with Mercedes sedans. Or, they are poor farmers who are tired of giving half

their rice harvest to the army, or being press-ganged into widening roads, so that tourist coaches can reach the golden pagodas encircled by souvenir shops. They are even the wives and the children of high-ranking officials who, after fierce rows at home, go off to hear "Auntie Suu".

They are all at risk by coming to see Ms Suu Kyi. But the gentle fire of this fragile-looking 49-year-old woman who dares to challenge the generals has given them courage, too. One rally-goer, standing rather fearfully next to the barbed fence of a house commandeered by the secret police, said: "She's become like a protective deity for us."

Every rally that Ms Suu Kyi has held since her release last year, after six years under house arrest, has been charged with the uncertainty that, at any time, the riot police hiding at opposite ends of her lakeside home will scythe through the crowd and arresting everyone, including Ms Suu Kyi and other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD).

The danger of her re-arrest has risen dramatically. The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) passed a new law a week ago aimed specifically at her and her supporters. The Slorc tried to scare away people from her rallies with threats of jail sentences.

"I'm not sure why they needed this new law," said Ms Suu Kyi, wryly. "They've been arresting people for a long time now without it." When she called an NLD party congress in late May, the angry Slorc arrested 262 league members. More than 120 of her supporters, many of them MPs elected in the 1990 elections, ignored by the junta, are still being held in military intelligence "guest houses" around Rangoon.

But she defied the junta. On 8 June, she clambered up to her usual place on the fence and began to talk. Because she did not hack away from the junta's threats, neither did her supporters. More than 10,000 came

to hear her (though her tone towards the generals and this weekend was milder and slightly conciliatory). "Slorc has a low opinion of our Burmese people. They think they're easily frightened. But this isn't true, so many came out," she explained.

Why did the military regime fail to carry out its threats? It is a question that neither Ms Suu Kyi nor Western observers in Rangoon can answer. The inner workings of the secretive ruling council, whose life revolves around military compounds and the golf course, is a mystery to Burmese and foreign diplomats alike.

They are reduced to divining the Slorc's views on the pro-democracy movement by how rude the insults are against Ms Suu Kyi in the state daily, the

New Light of Myanmar. Lately, the jibes against her have become more venomous. "Maybe the Slorc is just biding their time with us," said Ms Suu Kyi.

Directly across the avenue from her house is another villa full of secret police. It is close enough so that police scribes, in T-shirts and sarongs, can take notes on her speeches without leaving the verandah.

Ms Suu Kyi is a good speaker, friendly and personal, and she cannot resist an occasional joke at the Slorc's expense.

After one jibe, a ripple of laughter spread through the crowd. I glanced over and saw one of the police on the verandah. He was smiling in agreement. Then he caught himself quickly, and solemnly resumed his spying.



Undaunted: Aung San Suu Kyi with the chairman of Burma's democracy league in Rangoon

Photograph: AP

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Tactical voting hits Moscow's polling booths

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Yevgeny Yegorov had made his mind up about one thing. Wherever else in Russia the authorities might try to fiddle the vote, they would not get away with it on his patch. He and his fellow observers from the Communist Party were going to be as vigilant as hawks.

"I think there probably will be some falsification," he said, as he gazed morosely across the town square, which was teeming with people who had come to vote but who were lingering to watch the election day festivities - clowns, a theatre troupe, and a military band playing favourites from old Soviet movies.

The patch in question was Moskovsky, a community 10 miles south of Moscow which owes its living largely to roses, carnations and cucumbers. For Mr Yegorov and his six party colleagues, this was barren soil, enemy territory where the liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky came first in December's elections. That was one reason they were here: to weed out any sign of fraud by the pro-reformers.

"They have been very correct, very co-operative so far," he admitted yesterday lunchtime, after carefully inspecting the wax seals on the ballot boxes. "But the crucial time is between 8pm and 10pm. The risk is that the organisers have acquaintances whom they know won't be voting, and decide to vote on their behalf. We will be watching constantly."

The plan was straightforward. He would stay at his post until the count was complete. By law, he would then get a copy of the figures to pass on to party district and regional headquarters. From there it would go up the line to the Communist central committee, where they were doing a nationwide count. "And just in case they suddenly run out of protocols here, I have brought my own," he said, flourishing a fistful of

documents.

Before the election, the Communists vowed to place observers in all the 95,000 stations across Russia to make it as hard as possible for any vote-rigging to occur. Mr Yeltsin's campaign did the same, mindful that many of the local election officials who run the voting stations are Communists.

Last night it was impossible to tell whether either side had fulfilled its plans, although there were observers in the Moscow region. Meanwhile, the whole



Inmates voting yesterday in Moscow's Butyrskaya jail. Photograph: Reuter

process is being watched by 1,200 international observers, roughly one for each of the 85 voting centres.

For all the suspicions of Mr Yegorov, a 60-year-old retired farm official, the scene was as serene as the nearby greenhouses. Children rode bicycles in the square while their parents wandered in to vote or browse the stalls packed with fruit, chocolates, tins of fish, beer, vodka, soap and other luxuries. Two actresses dressed as witches, their peaked hats jutting into the rainy skies, were playing a game called "Make Your Choice". Passers-by had to toss a hat on to a stick.

Inside the busy polling booths there was serious activity. In December's parliamentary elections, many electors had been bewildered. With a choice of 43 parties, many had stood in the booths studying the official guide like punters at the races. But yesterday, they knew what they were doing.

"I'm for Yeltsin," said Anna Stramashenko, a 78-year-old grandmother, who was a nurse at the Battle of Stalingrad. "People keep saying it's had in Russia today, but I have everything I need. In the war, the earth around us burned. I don't see any burning fields today." More predictably perhaps, Alexei and Maxim, 25-year-olds who run their own transport company, also backed the president. "There's one reason - freedom," said Maxim.

Democracy is still young in Russia, but Vladimir Koligov, a horticulturist, had learned all its subtleties. The candidate for whom he voted yesterday has little chance of meeting July's runoff, as well he knew, but his was a carefully planned strategic vote. Mr Koligov chose the liberal democrat, Grigory Yavlinsky, because he believes Mr Yeltsin will win without his vote.

To Mr Koligov this was not a wasted vote. He believes that if Mr Yavlinsky gets enough votes, Mr Yeltsin will have to strike a deal with him before the next round. The pace of reforms will be quickened, Mr Koligov does not much like Yeltsin, but he prefers him to the unknown quantity of Mr Zyuganov, the Communist leader.

Mr Yeltsin needed strategic voters yesterday. The president's advisers have been fretting that his rash claims of outright victory last week may well have been an own goal, encouraging people to vote for third party candidates on the grounds that he would win anyway. But, as tactical voting goes, Mr Koligov was operating on a level that even these advisers had not considered. Russians are catching on to democracy fast.



Close-up: A Russian in St Petersburg studies his ballot paper. Photograph: Reuter

Democratic fervour fades in the sunshine

HELEN WOMACK
Druzhba

Boris Yeltsin lost at least one vote yesterday because of the "dacha factor". Vitaly Matveyev, a musician from Moscow who was relaxing at his dacha (but and allotment) in Druzhba, south of the city, had planned to get up early and take the suburban train to the capital to re-elect the Russian President, especially since public transport was free on election day.

But when he woke and saw the sun was shining after two days of torrential rain, he changed his mind. "I'll stay here and take my kids into the woods instead," he said. What about the fate of Russia? "What will be, will be. It's in the hands of the gods. I don't think my little voice will make much difference." Typical Russian fatalism, typical Russian susceptibility to mood, which is why experts told us not to set too much store on polls showing Mr Yeltsin having overtaken his Communist rival, Gennady Zyuganov.

The President's fate will depend on the rest of his supporters being more committed than Mr Matveyev: on any summer weekend, 20 per cent of urban Russians are out of town. In view of the Russian preference for not taking anything for granted, it was surprising Mr

Matveyev, Viktor Frolov, an engineer at a railway centre, was watering his cucumbers, after which he and his wife were going to drive home to Moscow to vote for Mr Zyuganov. "The Yeltsin years have been hard for all involved in science and teaching," he said.

At 10am there was a lively stream of traffic to and from Moscow. People who had voted early were driving out to their dachas to enjoy the rest of the day. People who had been at their dachas were cutting the weekend short and returning to town to vote. Police were gearing up for huge traffic-jams.

By the side of the road, the real country folk were coming from village polling-stations dressed in their Sunday best, as if for church. In the market town of Bronitsa, halfway to Moscow, the local House of Culture, turned into a polling-station for the day, was reporting brisk business.

To the side of the yellow-curtained booths, on a trestle table decorated with vases of peonies, a local catering firm was running a buffet. Manager Lyudmila Logvinova said her voting intentions were private but hinted she would opt for a pro-reform candidate. "Food may be expensive," she said, "but at least now there are more empty shelves and a good choice of things to eat."

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Zyuganov on Yeltsin:

'One look at his face would tell you that democracy has never spent the night there'

Yeltsin on Zyuganov:

'He is for the destruction of everything that has been accomplished, under the banner of a socialist revenge'



Jittery Yeltsin stunned by poor turn-out

PHIL REEVES
and HELEN WOMACK
MOSCOW

Boris Yeltsin's campaign team last night staged a frantic last-minute effort to persuade Russians to take part in their first presidential election since the end of the Soviet Union, amid fears that he was heading for a disappointing result because of an unexpectedly low turn-out.

Worried that his predicted support had failed to materialise, they drafted in several top artists, who issued an extraordinary appeal to the electorate to go to their polling-booths, only two hours before they closed in Moscow. The move came after initial figures showed turn-out was lower than the 75 per cent Mr Yeltsin's experts had hoped for, which is seen as bad for the President, whose record is marred by five difficult years of reform and a catastrophic war in Chechnya.

His Communist rival, Gennady Zyuganov, is not thought to suffer much from low voting figures, as his supporters are the party faithful, who snap up

every opportunity to register their protest about declining living standards and rising crime.

Such was the concern in the Yeltsin camp that the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, implored Russians to go to the voting booths "so as not to trade your future for an extra hour in front of television set or at your dachas and vegetable plots." His words, which reflected fears that many voters were staying at home to watch the Russia-Germany Euro 96

match, were echoed by Sergei Solovoy, a film director, who appealed to the public to vote for the President.

At a press conference at the President's campaign headquarters, he told Russia's youth they might "wake up in a different country" if they did not vote. Another director, Pyotr Todorovsky, and the ballerina Yekaterina Maximova, who had flown in from Germany to vote, condemned the "inactivity" of their compatriots.

The Russian Far East is a poor guide to voting patterns in European Russia, where three-quarters of the population lives, but evidence that it had seen a turn-out of 60-70 per cent brought gloom to the Yeltsin camp. An official at the president's headquarters in Moscow said turn-out was "much less than expected, and is above all a problem for the President".

Despite fears of unrest, voting went more or less smoothly. There were several bomb scares around the country, and a provincial police chief was injured by a mine, but the only serious trouble occurred in Grozny, which saw its worst fighting in several weeks.

Earlier, Mr Yeltsin struck a robust note as he voted with his wife Naina on a wet morning in Moscow.

Asked if Mr Zyuganov could beat him, he cried "No way!" before telling reporters that he planned to spend the evening watching the football, a bizarre tactic given that he needed Russians to do the opposite.

Like a boxer weighing in for the fight, Mr Zyuganov was

equally full of meaningless rhetoric. "All the votes will be ours," he declared as he voted in his Moscow district, a claim that was only slightly more improbable than that of the nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who announced that he would get 27 per cent.

If initial signs that Mr Yeltsin and Mr Zyuganov will finish close to neck-and-neck are true - and the picture will not become clear until later today - then it may, paradoxically, improve the President's chances of victory in a run-off next month. A narrow defeat may help to re-

unite Mr Yeltsin's self-confident, squabbling team.

But it is also likely to be a blow to the morale of the President, who mounted a spectacular campaign in which he travelled the length and breadth of the country, distributing huge wads of money, performing media stunts, making speeches, and generally behaving like a US-style campaigner on the stump.

After such an energetic performance - culminating in his appearance last week before 100,000 mostly young people in Red Square - it is hard to

imagine that he has other tricks up his sleeve, or the energy to carry them out. Although his health has held up remarkably well, his advisers are bound to be concerned about the risk of a relapse if he has to launch a fierce new assault. A recurrence of his heart trouble would be a political disaster.

More worrying to his team will be the signs that the effect of his heavy campaigning may begin to wear off. He may also rue his recent claim that he would win outright - a remark that may have deterred tactical voters.

Although only two of the 10 candidates will go through to a July run-off, the performance of other candidates could be crucial. The Kremlin will be hoping for a strong showing from Alexander Lebed, in the belief that he takes votes away from the Communists.

The general, who has little chance of building a political career on his own, has been wooed by Mr Yeltsin recently, and may join his team before the run-off. If he does well, it could mean that a large number of his votes fall into the grateful hands of Mr Yeltsin.

Chechens boycott vote

CARLOTTA GALL
Grozny

The polling station on Yalta Street in central Grozny was boarded up and locked yesterday. Outside lay the remnants of the ballot box, torn into pieces.

"There will not be any elections here," said Akhmed Adiyev, the district's chief engineer. The day before, gunmen had made sure. According to witnesses, four men in civil-

ian clothes drove up at midnight, fired automatic rifles into the air and seized the box.

Polling stations were open yesterday to allow Chechens to vote in Russia's presidential election as well as local parliamentary elections organised by the pro-Moscow government installed in Grozny. But after 18 months of war against Russia, few Chechens turned out to vote, apparently anticipating trouble from separatist rebels who oppose the elections.



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Boris accused of rigging

Moscow — The Russian presidency is, formally, the most powerful elected office in the world. The head of state is commander-in-chief of the armed forces with control over the nuclear arsenal. He can also initiate legislation, writes Helen Womack.

Boris Yeltsin was Russia's first democratically elected President, chosen in 1991 for five years under the Soviet-era constitution. Tension has surrounded his campaign for a further term, which will be four years under the constitution of 1993. Rivals have suggested there could be vote-rigging.

In addition to 1,200 international observers, monitors from political parties are going to the 95,000 polling stations across the country's 11 time zones to check the official count. Some 107 million people are eligible to vote.

Apart from Mr Yeltsin, nine other politicians are running. A preliminary result should be available today. If no candidate wins an overall majority, the top two go forward to a second round in which the first past the post wins. The second round must be held within 15 days of the announcement of the first-round result. A run-off is likely to be held on 7 or 14 July.

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1	2	3	4	5
£500-£750 1	£750-£1,000 2	£1,000-£1,500 3	£1,500-£2,000 4	Over £2,000 5
3	4	5	6	7
Under 2 Years 1	2-3 Years 2	3-4 Years 3	4-5 Years 4	5-6 Years 5
1	3	4	5	6
Less than 10% 1	10%-24% 2	25%-29% 3	30%-39% 4	Over 40% 5
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Whitewater scandal: Senate report says Hillary Clinton was behind cover-up into aide's suicide

Legal net closes on First Lady

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

A fraught Whitewater season for the Clintons opened yesterday with a Senate report charging that the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, was behind a concerted attempt to curb the investigation into the suicide of Vince Foster, her friend and deputy White House counsel, in July 1993.

According to the findings prepared by the Republican majority on the Senate Whitewater Committee and leaked to the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, Mrs Clinton immediately "dispatched her trusted lieutenants to contain any potential embarrassment or political damage" that could arise from Mr Foster's papers.

These dealt, *inter alia*, with the now notorious Whitewater real-estate venture.

The Whitewater special prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, will now be asked to investigate whether three of those trusted lieutenants — Mrs Clinton's chief of staff, Maggie Williams, her close friend, Susan Thomas, and the former White House counsel, Bernard Nussbaum — committed perjury in their evidence to the committee during its 13 months of hearings or otherwise obstructed justice.

Ms Williams, according to sworn testimony from a Secret Service agent, removed documents from Mr Foster's office on the night of his death, while law enforcement officials have accused Mr Nussbaum of systematically limiting their access

to the office until his own secret search was complete, on the instructions of Mrs Clinton.

Thereafter, the report continues, the White House continued to make life as difficult as possible for investigators, obfuscating and prevaricating at every turn. "Crucial files and documents 'disappeared' or were withheld from scrutiny whenever questions were raised," it says.

Capitol Hill, however, is only one of the places which will be making Whitewater headlines in the coming days and weeks. Today a second Whitewater-related trial starts in Little Rock, while the Senate criticism of Mrs Clinton can only embolden Mr Starr in his investigations, which some observers believe could yet lead to her

indictment for either perjury or obstruction of justice. Although she never testified to the committee, Mrs Clinton has already suffered the indignity — unprecedented for a sitting First Lady — of being summoned before a federal grand jury.

Lurking in the background, meanwhile, is a forthcoming Supreme Court ruling on the sexual harassment suit brought against the President by the former Arkansas state employee, Paula Jones. If the court refuses to hear an appeal by Mr Clinton, intensely embarrassing pre-trial proceedings could start this autumn, just weeks before the election.

Publicly, the Clinton camp is sneering at the Senate report, deriding it as "a taxpayer-subsidised press release for the Republican Presidential campaign", while the separate verdict to be delivered by the Democratic minority on the committee will undoubtedly clear the White House of all wrongdoing.

But the renewed Whitewater controversy, coupled with the rumpus over alleged White House misuse of confidential FBI files in 1993, may be starting to have an impact on public opinion. Recently as high as 25 per cent, Mr Clinton's lead in the polls over his Republican challenger Bob Dole is narrowing — to as little as 6 per cent in a Time/CNN survey published yesterday.

Nor will the trial of two Arkansas small-town bankers which starts today advance Mr Clinton's cause. As in the trial which ended last month with the conviction on fraud charges of his former Whitewater partners, James and Susan McDougal and Jim Guy Tucker, his successor as Arkansas Governor, the President will give videotaped testimony for the defence, probably on 7 July.

Herby Branscum Jr and Robert Hill are accused of illegally channelling \$13,000 (£8,500) into Mr Clinton's 1990 gubernatorial re-election campaign. Though the sum involved is derisory, the case could implicate Bruce Lindsey, the Clinton campaign treasurer of six years ago who remains one of the President's closest White House advisers. If so, the discomfort for Mr Clinton would be acute.

Thriving on all the news unfit to print

In this age of virtue, when politicians are expected to act as though they were halfway to sainthood, regular appearances in scandal sheets would seem to be the wrong way to curry favour with the voters. Yet it is to scandals that Gerhard Schröder, once-obscure leader of the region of Lower Saxony, can attribute his inexorable rise: every controversy propels him nearer to the apex of power in Germany.

In Britain, Mr Schröder would be labelled a champagne socialist. But the good life for Germany's left-wing *bons vivants* is more demanding than that. Drinking fine wines is only a sideline for the Social Democrats of the "Tuscany set". Jetting to Vienna for an opera at a company's expense, as Mr Schröder has done, is deemed more impressive.

Some taxpayers in his debt-ridden *Land* were shocked by that particular escapade, especially when they discovered his trip had been paid for by Volkswagen, the region's most important company, in which Mr Schröder's government still holds shares. But most agreed that their leader had deserved his little holiday and congratulated him for getting somebody else to foot the bill.

The episode, whipped into a scandal by the conservative popular press, was symptomatic of the way Mr Schröder can turn adverse publicity to his advantage. The break-up of his marriage this year was another example. Mr Schröder, 52, had run off with a journalist 20 years his junior and the tabloids were getting into sermonising mode but the object of their odium, instead of crawling into a hole, went on the attack.

If papers wanted scandal, he

LOCAL HEROES

No 21: Gerhard Schröder

would give it them by the shoeful. By the end of an account of the demise of the marriage, readers were convinced Mr Schröder had been the injured party all along. Why, his wife even refused to make schnitzel when he got home from a gruelling business trip.

The story was told as a German *Dallas* at the court of Hanover, which under Mr Schröder regained some of the glory lost long ago with the departure of the local ruling family for England. His expulsion from the palace by his wife was transformed from a tale of marital infidelity into martyrdom.

Political disloyalty, which Mr Schröder has in abundance, has also kept him in good stead. He can take credit for shafting the Social Democrats' unpopular leader, Rudolf Scharping, last year. Mr Schröder sniped



Gerhard Schröder: Leering tabloids boosted his career

at his party boss until he was begging to be overthrown, which happened when Oskar Lafontaine mounted a leadership challenge in November.

Mr Scharping was readied for the kill by criticism from Hanover. What the party needed, Mr Schröder said, was a leader with strong convictions, charisma, and popular appeal. Although he fell short of specifying that the party boss should be called Gerhard, most people got the message.

As the lustre of the Lafontaine regime fades, the Schröder alternatives seem ever more alluring. The SPD is again in the doldrums. Its trade-union allies have mounted spectacular demonstrations against the conservative government's austerity programme but have not made an iota of difference to the fiercest attack since the war on the welfare state.

"Somebody must stop Kohl," the cry goes out, no later at least than the next elections in 1998. Mr Lafontaine patently will not be able to do it, but Mr Schröder might. The left hates him because he seems to believe in nothing other than himself and the need to create a low-wage climate in which big business can operate.

He says outrageous things about left-wing economics and the common European currency that is so important to the German establishment — "monopoly money". But he is also popular in the country, the only SPD politician who could give Helmut Kohl a run for his money, say the polls. A few more headlines, however unfavourable, would go a long way towards ensuring his candidature for a party in kamikaze mode.

Imre Karacs



Waifs and spray: Children in Bombay flee giant waves whipped up by weather that has already caused 100 deaths over the past three days

Photograph: Reuters

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Who, the Beirut newspaper *L'Orient Le Jour* wanted to know on its front page this weekend, "committed this especially heinous crime"? If Israeli troops had been clearly to blame for the death of three Lebanese children on Friday, few doubt that it would have prompted an immediate response from Hizbollah guerrillas, and calls from the Lebanese government for the condemnation of Israel at the UN. But the deaths of eight-year-old Tagrid Katsish, and Hamehmed Hussein and Mohamed Jawad, both aged 12, were not that simple.

The Hizbollah forces have committed an ugly crime against children in Houla to distort resistance operations. "This denial might have been more credible had the guerrillas not announced responsibility for a bomb on the same stretch of roadway the previous day, explosives which the Hizbollah boasted at the time, wounded a Lebanese 'collaborator'." Under the terms of the April ceasefire, every truck violation must be referred to an international committee, which does not yet exist. *Robert Fisk - Beirut*

Burundian troops massacred at least 70 Hutu civilians in central Burundi last Thursday, community workers quoted survivors as saying. The ex-patriate workers, who have lived in the area of the massacre for two years but declined to be identified, had a list of the names of 40 Hutus and one member of the Twa ethnic group who were killed by troops. *Reuters - Bujumbura*

Austrians turned out to vote in a re-run of general elections in 17 constituencies after a first round was played by irregularities, boycotted by the opposition and criticised in the West. Most opposition parties, including the Socialists, abstained from yesterday's ballot, saying they would be satisfied only with a fresh election for most parliamentary seats. *Reuters - Vienna*

UN inspectors left Iraq after a confrontation with Iraqi guards who barred them from entering sites suspected of containing illegal weapons material. The chief UN inspector said the stand-off was the most serious in the five years that the teams have been sent to Iraq. The Iraqis would not let inspectors enter three sites, and allowed only partial entry to a fourth. "We were surprised at the way the Iraqis behaved," Nikita Svidovich said after he arrived in Bahrain, regional headquarters of the inspectors' Special Commission. "This time was different. This time they flatly denied access." *AP - Baghdad*

Chinese and American negotiators raced against the clock yesterday to settle differences over copyright piracy and avert a multi-billion-dollar trade war. With hours to go before punishing trade sanctions begin, a source said officials were struggling to hammer out the final text of an agreement. An official of China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation said no announcement was likely today. Tariffs on trade sanctions will go into force at midnight today unless Peking and Washington resolve their differences. *Reuters - Beijing*

The party that came out on top in Bangladesh's elections last week got support yesterday, which will boost its bid to form the new government. "We urge the President to appoint the Awami League, the single largest party in parliament, to form the new government," the Jatiya Party said. Jatiya, led by Hissam Mohammad Ershad, emerged as the third largest party in Wednesday's voting. The support of the Jatiya Party gives the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina the backing of more than half of the 300-member parliament. *Reuters - Dhaka*

President Jacques Chirac led 3,000 French and German youths in a tribute to the 350,000 soldiers of both countries who fell in the Battle of Verdun in the First World War. Mr Chirac called on the youths "to mobilise yourselves to make sure everyone in Europe will have his or her place to work in peace, security and prosperity and that justice and solidarity will reign among the peoples of Europe." *Reuters - Verdun*

An angry columnist urged Muslims to boycott Coca-Cola products in Kuwait because of a photograph. "I am calling on every Muslim: Do not drink Coca-Cola," Fouad Hashem, one of Kuwait's most prominent columnists, wrote. "Let them go to hell with their drink." The picture showed a man in a Muslim prayer position prostrating to the Coca-Cola logo. *Reuters - Kuwait*

Weekend Breaks with THE INDEPENDENT
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1. The two nights for the price of one offer and £5 lunch offer are both subject to availability.
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سكيا في الامم

Keep talking: it's the only way to beat them

The IRA is stupid; and because the IRA is stupid, the peace process for the time being is over. That doesn't mean the political process is over — the search for a new political settlement for Northern Ireland must go on. But the whole point of this peace process as originally envisaged was that it included Sinn Féin and the IRA. After Manchester, it is very hard to see how they can be brought back in for a long time.

The problem for the peace process is this. Either Gerry Adams knew that the Manchester bomb was going to happen, or he did not. Whichever it was, our conclusions must be bleak.

If he did know, the republican movement has been playing a nice cop, nasty cop routine; "He's a nice fellow Gerry, but he's got these brutal friends. So if you don't deal with Gerry..." No democratic government can respond to that. Ergo, the peace process is dying, even if the IRA do resume the cease-fire. The image of Gerry Adams as Gandhi outside the (not quite) all-party talks is so swiftly displaced by the devastated centre of an English city that the whole charade crumbles before our eyes.

Few can now take seriously any "pause" in bombing that the republican movement chooses to indulge in. The Manchester bomb may well have been an attempt to demonstrate their position and power before resuming a cease-fire

once more. No organisation can be allowed to get away with such crude bullying. Although in the past, other parties to the talks might have been prepared to accommodate IRA qualms about de-commissioning, or clever words about the permanence of the cease-fire, now things have changed. The Manchester bomb and the murder of an Irish detective in Limerick have done much to harden hearts. John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister and Dick Spring, the Foreign Minister, have stuck their necks out in the past to give Sinn Féin the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to peace. Now they — like John Major, nationalist John Hume and unionist David Trimble and others prepared to compromise for peace — have been humiliated. In Mr Bruton's words yesterday, "This is a slap in the face to people who've been trying, against perhaps their better instincts, to give Sinn Féin a chance to show that they could persuade the IRA to reinstate the cease-fire."

Both governments will be sceptical about including Gerry Adams or Martin McGuinness in peace talks now. A cease-fire alone will not and should not be enough for the British and Irish governments to deal with Sinn Féin. The republican movement will have to demonstrate that this time it really means it. Short of surrendering its arms voluntarily, it is hard to imagine what they could do to overcome people's cynicism.



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But consider the alternative scenario. What if Gerry Adams didn't know and didn't approve of the Manchester bomb? This is in some ways worse. It suggests that the IRA have given up on him, Sinn Féin and the peace process — or at least that those in charge have. The big question then is whether Gerry Adams would ever split the republican movement in the cause of peace. To do so would greatly enhance his international standing but risks making him the Michael Collins of the 1990s, courting assassination by his former colleagues, in pursuit of the greater good.

If he were to split on his own, without taking any of the military wing or public support with him, he would be nigh-on useless. Like politicians who have split from the republican movement before, he would swiftly disappear from view.

But there is an optimistic view. Possibly, just possibly, Gerry Adams and cronies who are prepared to compromise can either win an internal power struggle, or take enough people with them to weaken the military extremists who are left behind. Of the 15 per cent of Northern Ireland voters supporting Gerry Adams last month, many felt

they were voting for a genuine, if tough, strategy for peace. Many were as disgusted and disillusioned with the news of the bomb as everyone else. They will be well aware that Sinn Féin only started down the conciliatory route in the first place because 25 years of violence achieved nothing. IRA hardliners who want to return to decades more pointless violence must eventually lose credibility among their own people. To make himself politically respectable, Gerry Adams must sooner or later break with the real hard men in the IRA.

But no matter how optimistic we are and how benign we believe Gerry Adams to be, the bottom line is that it will take Sinn Féin some time to change its spots. And either way, the military campaign of a ruthless minority will go on.

So has anything survived Manchester? Yes. Although the peace process is dead, the political process must and will go on. Eighty-five per cent of Northern Ireland voters did not support the IRA, and their interests should be represented. David Trimble, as leader of the Ulster Unionists, has acquitted himself well in the talks so far, being willing to compromise and distancing himself from Ian Paisley's obstinacy. Negotiations between Trimble, Hume, and the Irish and British governments are still extremely worthwhile. They have the chance to create a new political atmosphere and new

institutions in which unionists and nationalists can work together on non-sectarian issues. In time, we must hope that Sinn Féin's supporters, with or without Gerry Adams, abandon their allegiance to the bombers, and move into the democratic mainstream. Progress in Northern Ireland is possible without the IRA.

The road to a more secure Irish settlement will be long and difficult. The behaviour of the IRA in the past few months will have disillusioned many who were naive about its intentions. We had long been told that the IRA were sophisticated political operators, clever in their propaganda and the way they manipulate outside opinion. Look at Gerry Adams glad-handing his way round US TV studios raising cash and political capital. Consider, too, the way they have refrained from violence in Northern Ireland itself in the past few months.

In fact the IRA is not a brilliant machiavellian organisation, nor is it united. The belligerence of hardliners who cannot see further than the next explosion will ultimately damage the interests of the republican movement as well as destroying the prospects for immediate peace. The other parties to the talks must keep their nerve. The only way to marginalise and destroy the terrorists in the end will be if the democratic politicians keep talking, working and moving forward together.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time to tackle global poverty

Sir: You rightly gave Christopher Bellamy's article ("The end of war — and peace", 14 June) on our ever dangerous world the front page prominence it deserved.

As we approach the end of the millennium, hundreds of thousands of people are losing their lives in internal conflicts, while millions are forced to flee and face an uncertain future in burgeoning refugee camps. The causes of recent conflicts are complex and varied, but the common cause they invariably share is poverty. Poverty all too often leads to disputes over scarce resources between communities forced to live on the edge of survival. These conflicts are "resource wars".

The gap between rich and poor is accelerating. Surely the time is ripe for the leaders of the rich world to take a lead in tackling this insidious threat of global poverty? As well as the moral imperative for action it is increasingly obvious that global security will serve all our interests.

The short-sighted policy of containment not only costs lives but also does not make economic sense. In the last five years the UK's peacekeeping budget has shot from £2m to an estimated £275m. The costs are soaring. Intervening earlier, being vigorous with preventive diplomacy and, crucially, investing in efforts to tackle poverty would save lives and go a long way to prevent conflicts spiralling out of control. Prevention is better — and cheaper — than cure.

When the leaders of the world's richest and most influential countries meet in France for the G7 Summit at the end of this month they might care to reflect, and act, on this fact.

DAVID BRYER
Director
Oxfam
Oxford

Sir: It was gratifying to see the *Independent* give such prominence to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report and the phenomenon of the numerous armed conflicts within "weak" or "failed" states ("The end of war — and peace", 14 June). Such conflicts kill tens of thousands of people each year, cause massive population displacements and destroy the livelihoods and development prospects of millions, yet they receive little coverage in most of the United Kingdom media.

Your readers may be interested to know that the UK contains a very active community of agencies and researchers working to understand and address this modern scourge. The UK Network on Conflict, Development and Peace (Codep) was formed in 1993 and provides a forum for many of the Non-Governmental Organisations working in countries affected by conflict.

Besides the large humanitarian aid and development NGOs, the Overseas Development Administration and researchers, the network also includes those NGOs which have specialised been formed to prevent and resolve conflicts through facilitation, training and advocacy. JOHN BORTON
Relief and Disaster Policy Programme
Overseas Development Institute
London NW1



Cash's Trotskyist tactics

Sir: If Bill Cash's Bill earlier this week had been a straightforward plea for a referendum on UK membership of a single currency, once the details of the deal and the circumstances of convergence were known, it would probably have commanded widespread support within all parties (including myself).

For most, I think, accept the principle that such a major constitutional departure as a single currency requires popular assent or the legitimacy of any new constitutional dispensation would increasingly be questioned.

Bill Cash, however, sought something quite different. He sought a referendum in advance of any specific proposals with the following loaded question: "Do you want the UK to propose and insist (my emphasis) on irreversible changes in the Treaty on European Union so that the UK retains its powers of government and is not part of a Federal Europe nor part of a European Monetary Union, including a single currency?" Just how this might be implemented raises many questions.

Tory Euro-sceptics are often compared to Labour's Bernites in the early 1980s. I think a comparison with Trotskyists is more apt in that Bill Cash appears to be proposing demands that are probably impossible to fulfil in the hope that the popular disappointment (this engenders will help build a bridge between present realities (in which most people favour EU membership) to a future in which the EU is fundamentally recast or falls on

without the UK. That some of Bill Cash's supporters back the line for fear of being savaged by James Goldsmith and his money adds insult to injury. That Baroness Thatcher is now backing such apparent Trotskyist tactics only compounds this. HARRY BARNES MP
(North East Derbyshire, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Abused children's complaints

Sir: All credit to the *Independent* for its persistent reporting on the abuse of children in residential care and the failure to publish the Jellings Report.

The news that there are to be two inquiries — one national with full judicial powers and one into abuse of children in Chwyd — is welcome and long overdue ("At last the children are heard", 13 June). It would be comforting to think that since implementation of the Children Act 1989 such widespread abuse of children would no longer be possible.

As an organisation which pioneered the introduction of complaints procedures and independent advocacy services in residential care in the North-west, we are painfully aware that this is not the case. Section 26 of the Act requires each local authority to establish a procedure for considering any complaints (including any complaint) made to them by any child who is being looked after by them.

Children attempting to make complaints are in an extremely vulnerable position. They fear that speaking out may lead to the withdrawal of services or affection, or even more active victimisation. Children are reluctant to use procedures which they do not fully understand and find forbidding and difficult.

Experience shows that it is virtually impossible for a child or a young person to complain effectively without an independent adult advocate to stand beside them. Even with such support complaints procedures may present children with a prolonged and tortuous obstacle course which they are understandably reluctant to negotiate in the absence of effective redress at the end of it. The child's complaints are frequently denied, on the basis that they have misunderstood or over-reacted.

A key element in inquiries into abuse in residential care has been classification of basic human rights as "privileges". Telephone calls, contact visits, even food in some cases, are privileges to be earned or withheld by staff who may be all powerful in their own isolated and abusive systems. This power is exercised not just in respect of vulnerable children but also in respect of other adults and professionals who may become sucked into a distorted and punitive regime in the name of "care" and, dare it be said, "the best interests of the child". JUDITH TIMMS
Director, Independent Representation for Children in Need
Heswall, Merseyside

Penalties for late payment of debts

Sir: The remarks of Richard Page, minister for small business, blaming small firms for the late payment of their bills ("Small firms' fury over debt blame", 14 June) are the latest in a line of ministerial gaffes over late payment.

The Federation of Small Businesses estimates that 5,000 of the 40,000 small firms that went under last year were victims of late payment, and a survey by the Forum for Private Business found that late payment had prevented one in five small firms from expanding. Unlike this government, Labour is determined to change the culture which regards late payment as an acceptable practice. We will force government departments and other public agencies to pay on time, make large firms state in their annual accounts how often they paid late and introduce, after consultation on the best way to do it, a statutory interest rate for late payment of debts above a minimum threshold.

It cannot be right that small firms are disadvantaged because big business and government departments use them as a source of free credit. BARBARA ROCHE MP
(Hornsey and Wood Green, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW7

The writer is the Shadow Small Business Minister

Solution to fast tennis serve

Sir: Your article (15 June) "Tennis stars at full stretch to serve faster than ever" highlights again, this time from the aspect of longer rackets, the current problem of "serve and volley", the over-powerful first service.

Surely the simple and inexpensive (because no need to invest in slower halls, or different rackets, etc) solution is to ration the number of second services. I would suggest the following. The server is allowed a maximum of three of them in each game, unless deuce point is reached, in which case one is allowed for every two points played.

This solution preserves the thrill of full-speed first serves (ie on points when the server knows he has a second service in reserve), but by rationing them eliminates their present undue predominance. Dr NORMAN TANNER
Campion Hall, Oxford

Men are wanted

Sir: Your correspondent, Patricia Dawson (Letters, 14 June), expresses concern for the NHS should those 60 per cent of men, who had not signed on with a GP, now do so.

Perhaps she would sleep better were she to realise that general practices are paid capitation fees, would therefore benefit from such an exercise and would then be able to provide their unwilling patients with improved services, particularly since these men appear to make so little demands on the health service. Dr D L MAXWELL
Hayfield, London SE3

Disadvantaged summer babies

Sir: The Cambridge research reported today ("Summer children lose out in lessons", 12 June) confirms that carried out in Sheffield University when 1991 GCSE results were analysed. In this context it is interesting to note that findings published in 1994 by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) stated that "children who started school close to the age of four did less well than others. For older children length of schooling appeared to relate positively to achievement at Key Stage 1."

Parents of summer-born children in England and Wales are in a cleft stick here because, however much they may feel it advisable to withhold their child until the beginning of the next school year (when they would be the age for starting school), they would then most probably have to bypass the reception year (Year R) and go straight into Year 1. Even if they have had the benefit of a good nursery education beforehand, this will not necessarily compensate for, having to "break in" to the already established group and they will have missed the shared experiences of the others in the class.

Since statutory provision gives no child the right to three terms' education in Year R, we think a national policy for annual admission to primary education is needed in England and Wales which would give this right in all children.

One way of achieving this would be for those children born in May to August to start in the September after their fifth birthday — the statutory age for starting school — together with the autumn and spring-born who are due to enter in that school year. They would all then have the benefit of three terms in Year R, which would prepare them for tackling Year 1 of the National Curriculum in the following year and would probably raise standards. Mrs P E NICHOLAS
Campaign for Equal Access to Primary Education for All
Stevenage, Hertfordshire

Co-ordination of writing skills

Sir: I agree with Michael Harvey about the benefits of learning good handwriting (Letters, 13 June). They also apply to learning to draw or paint. However, the visual-spatial and fine-motor co-ordination which are required for writing can develop significantly later than those required for letter and word recognition and learning to read or select letters from a keyboard.

Many children suffer a slight degree of dyspraxia which is often unrecognised but which affects their hand-eye co-ordination and physical ability to trace, let alone draw, outlines or shapes. If this difficulty is allowed to frustrate them in learning to construct words from letters, their problems are worsened.

It is important for teachers and parents to recognise the difference between the skills of handwriting and the skills of literacy and not to assess levels of one by standards of the other. Handwriting should be learnt and practised alongside reading and writing, but must not become an obstacle to the acquisition of literacy. SARA CLARKE
Hayfield, Derbyshire

profile

Revealed: the 'Irish-American' senator who is as Irish as a stuffed vine leaf

As George Mitchell takes up his role as chairman of the peace talks, **David Usborne** visits Waterville, Maine, to dig out his roots

George Mitchell hesitated when asked by the British and Irish governments to chair the multi-party peace talks on Northern Ireland. He had already spent the winter navigating the province's sectarian cross-fire in preparing the report on arms decommissioning that paved the way for last month's elections. What possible attraction could there be in returning to the same battleground in the summer, when he could be in New York with his young wife of less than two years, particularly when the chances of success seemed modest at best?

If the former US senator from Maine is cursing now for having caved in to the entreaties of Dublin and London, who could blame him? Last week, he found himself vilified by Unionists who furiously denounced him as an Irish-American who would automatically hold a bias in favour of the Catholic nationalists. Then came this week-end's bloody terrorist explosion in the heart of Manchester. Could prospects for the talks, from which Sinn Féin are excluded indefinitely, look more bleak?

Yet this morning Senator Mitchell has still not packed his bags and he has become more important to the future of Northern Ireland than ever. A deal in the middle of last week reconfirmed his position in the chair, although the precise extent of his powers is still to be detailed. Meanwhile, he and his co-chairmen, the former Canadian Chief of Staff, General John de Chastelain, and the former Prime Minister of Finland, Harri Holkeri, issued a statement deploring the Manchester blast. "This reprehensible act comes at a crucial time, just days after multi-party talks began," they declared. "We believe that the way to peace is not through violence but rather through meaningful dialogue."

Anyone who deals with Mr Mitchell should know not to make assumptions about him. Consider, for example, that meek and owlish exterior, and monkish smile. There is steel within the man who has been an army intelligence officer

and a federal judge, as well as a politician. Take the day during the Iran-Contra hearings when he chided Oliver North for pleading to Congress not to abandon the Nicaraguan Contras "for the love of God and for the love of country". The senator replied: "Although he is regularly asked to do so, God does not take sides in American politics. And in America, disagreement with the policies of the government is not evidence of a lack of patriotism."

It was assumptions - wrong ones - about Mr Mitchell that spurred last week's poisonous speculations by the Unionists. Not only is he an American, they smouldered, but also an Irish-American. That made him a paid-up member of the East Coast Irish aristocracy of the Kennedy clan and therefore sure to be prejudiced against the province's Protestant majority. Even after the agreement was reached to accept Senator Mitchell late on Tuesday, the Reverend Ian Paisley, the hyperbole-prone leader of the hardline Democratic Unionist Party, vowed to skip any session directly under the former senator's chairmanship, calling him the "Pope" and "a crony of Gerry Adams".

Rather than anger or impatience over these outbursts, Mr Mitchell showed only bewilderment. "This is a new experience for me," he told a reporter from the *New York Times*. "In 30 years in American politics, no one ever asked what my religion is or where my parents were from."

If the Unionists really want to understand the background of Senator Mitchell, they should look to where he came from: Waterville, a town of 20,000 in central Maine with a main street of proud brick façades and an industrial history that stems from the textile and paper mills that used to line its river, the Kennebec. If he were to spend some time here, Dr Paisley would find how far the caricature he has conjured for Mr Mitchell is removed from reality.

True, there is emerald blood in the senator's veins. And true, he is a Catholic. But it is not Guinness or Irish bread he asks for when he comes home to Waterville, where he was born. Nor does he head for a



George Mitchell in Belfast (right), where on Wednesday he chairs the next full session of talks. Above: his sister, Barbara, and Laya, who runs the Lebanese bakery in his hometown, Waterville, Maine. Photographs: Pacemaker/Whitney Draper

favourite Irish pub (unusually for a New England town of this size, there is none). With Barbara, his little sister, and his three elder brothers, John, Paul and Robbie, who all still live here, he likes to eat Middle Eastern staples such as stuffed vine leaves, lentils and goat's yoghurt. For, in blood terms, Mr Mitchell is at least as much Lebanese as he is Irish; and culturally, he is far more so. The Catholic part, meanwhile, is not Roman but Lebanese Maronite.

Gathered one day last week in the Waterville home of Barbara, she and two of the brothers, Paul and John, admit to knowing little about their paternal grandfather. Apparently named Kilroy, he came to the US from Ireland with his wife at the end of the last century. Their son - who was to be the senator's father - was given away to an orphanage and, somehow, perhaps aboard an orphan train from Boston,

found his way to Waterville at the age of three. The boy was picked out from a line-up after mass one Sunday in the town's only Maronite church by a Lebanese couple who raised him. It was this pair who chose the name Mitchell, seemingly because it closest resembled their original Arabic name, although what that was no one knows. Joseph Kilroy was

If he were to visit Waterville, Mr Paisley would find the caricature he has conjured is removed from reality

renamed George Mitchell and in time, he married a Lebanese girl, Minah Saad.

Barbara and I visited the spot where the first home of George and Minah (later Mary) Saad stood. Here, squeezed between the Kennebec and the old Maine Central Railroad, used to be an almost exclusively Lebanese shanty into which the senator and his siblings were born.

George senior was a janitor and Mary worked nights in one of the wool mills. The Mitchells escaped the area in the early Forties and it was raised in 1960. Now there is only a meadow and a car park which this weekend has been given over to a summer fair.

"This is where all the Lebanese began, right here," Barbara exclaims wistfully. We cross back over the tracks to the Lebanese Bakery on Temple Street, one of the few visible reminders of the old Lebanese

community, which has now been largely dispersed by intermarriage. Laya, behind the counter, offers spinach pies and she and Barbara exchange some words in Arabic about the unusually repressive heat today.

It used to be that the priority for immigrants in this country and for first-generation Americans was integration. It was a process of Americanisa-

tion that was often achieved through sports, where ethnic identities were forgotten. The Swisher, who still coaches college basketball, remembers: "We would play with Jewish-Americans, Lebanese-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Italian-Americans, but no one ever thought of anyone being anything other than plain American." This is the same philosophy that is feeding the senator's current bemusement in Belfast. "I am not an Irish-American," he told the *Times*. "I am not a Lebanese-American. I am not a hyphenated American."

But inside the walls of the Mitchell home there was a strong ethnic influence and it was provided by the mother. Until her death, Mary could barely read or write in English and she mostly spoke either Arabic or French with her husband. The children attended a Lebanese Maronite school and went to the Maronite church

every Sunday (the senator was an altar boy).

Of his father's origins, Paul, the eldest, remarks: "I don't remember even having a discussion with him about his Irish heritage." Barbara concurs: "In my childhood, I can't remember anything said or mentioned about Ireland. It didn't even exist." If ever the children told friends that their father was in fact of Irish stock, they would not believe them. Even the fact of his deep blue eyes would not persuade them that George senior was not Lebanese.

It was a Lebanese remedy that Mary reached for when she first concluded that George, aged about eight, was not growing fast enough and risked becoming the family runt. Barbara remembers: "My mother and father would travel about 15 miles in a borrowed car to get goat's milk for George. When they came home they would pour it into one of the glass bottles that the regular milk came in, so George wouldn't realise, and tell the rest of us: 'Don't you dare drink that, that's for little George.' Well he grew two inches in a year, so maybe she was right." She and her brothers laugh about the story even though they must have related it a hundred times. But Barbara adds teasingly: "I don't think goat's milk is drunk in Ireland, is it?"

There are other clues here, meanwhile, that Mr Paisley might appreciate, like the large framed photograph in the hall of Barbara's house of the senator and Barbara meeting the Queen in Washington a few years ago. (The only images of Mr Adams I can find are on

newspaper clippings of her brother's travels in Belfast.) He might also approve of the new wife, married amid much media wonderment in New York, at the end of 1994, just prior to his retirement from the Senate. A former tennis agent, Heather MacLachlan is 37 years old, an old flame of the one-time star player from Romania, Ion Tiriac, and strikingly beautiful. And she happens to be neither Irish, nor Lebanese nor Catholic, but a Canadian Anglican of Scottish heritage.

What the Unionists will not forget is Senator Mitchell's perceived association with Teddy Kennedy and other prominent Irish-Americans during his years on Capitol Hill. It is true that he was not able to escape the Kennedy orbit altogether. He would attend annual St Patrick's Day luncheons in Washington. When President Clinton first pondered extending a visa to Mr Adams to visit the United States, Mitchell was among about 45 senators and representatives who signed a letter urging him to do so.

But as a politician, the senator's Irish identity was never strongly visible. The few times he was honoured by an ethnic community, it was by the Lebanese, not the Irish. "I don't believe he was ever regarded as an Irish American in Congress," says Harold Pachios, a leading Maine lawyer and lifetime Mitchell friend who lives in Portland.

Pachios is less puzzled than angered by all the Unionist assaults on Mr Mitchell. "Does Paisley think he looks Irish?" he demands. "The Reverend Pais-

ley obviously has other reasons for saying these things because they are not true." Pachios also points to the one widely acknowledged quality in Mr Mitchell that presumably recommended him to Dublin and Ireland in the first place: his ability always to be impartial. "There isn't another human being I know who is less likely to be moved by passion, prejudice or anything of that sort. He is not factional in his approach to anything."

Mr Mitchell has backed out of things before. Even his decision to retire from the Senate took everybody by surprise. Months before, President Clinton had paid him the highest honour any former federal judge could hope for: a seat on the US Supreme Court. There was general astonishment when Mr Mitchell turned that down. So why should he not turn away now from a peace process that this morning seems only inches from disaster?

It may be that he still has faith that he can make a difference and that a settlement may even now be within reach. Perhaps he feels he owes it to President Clinton, for whom the Irish peace process, however ragged, is still an important card in his re-election campaign. There is another possibility, too: increasingly it is being whispered that if there is a second Clinton administration, the first choice for a US Secretary of State, charged with negotiating peace all around the world, could be George Mitchell. For that job, the Ulster peace talks could not be a more worthy test.

Reader, write your own jolly column!

Talking over recent Northern Irish carry-on with a well-informed English friend, I observed that things had come to a pretty pass when Robert McCartney QC, MP, leader of the tiny UK Unionist Party (which includes Conor Cruise O'Brien on its negotiating team), had told a member of the Ulster Unionist Party to "get in there and join your Lundy friends". "What was he driving at?" asked the bewildered Patricia. "What's Lord Lundy got to do with it? Were they in tears?"

Eventually we sorted ourselves out. McCartney was Robert Lundy, governor of Londonderry in 1689, who proposed surrendering the city to the forces of King James II but was overruled by stout-hearted citizens. "Base Lundy's treachery meanwhile," goes an Orange song. "Had much for James effected/But found untrue, the traitor vile/From Derry was ejected." Annually burnt in effigy, Lundy is the most vilified name in Ulster Protestant history.

Patricia's Lundy was the subject of a Hilaire Belloc Cau-

tionary Tale (based on Lord Curzon) about the rise and fall of a lachrymose politician: "Lord Lundy from his earliest years/Was far too freely moved to tears/For instance, if his mother said, 'Lundy! It's time to go to bed!'/He bellowed like a little Lunk."

All of which goes to show that Ulster Protestants may be British but they are not English - and vice versa.

Last week I was on a late-night radio discussion about Northern Ireland. Beside me for two hours sat a silent young man with gimlet eyes who was accompanying the participating Sinn Féin councillor. I thought at first he was just a minder, but I was told later by those in the know that he would have the additional function of making sure his man said nothing unacceptable. In Belfast youths like my silent neighbour are known as "Little Gerry Kells", after the convicted terrorist who - though not then part of the Sinn Féin delegation - used to attend meetings with ministers and officials and neither smile

nor speak. I prefer to give them the more attractive title of "Gerrybabies". But what a pity they are all such an emetic shade of green.

When I had a column on this paper last year, I reached the happy state of having much of it written by readers, so naturally, on being asked to stand in for Miles Kingston, I sent SOSs to a batch of prolific ex-contributors (known generically as elves). Dennis Potter is right: cryogenic preservation works.

Thrilled though I am to hear from them, I am worried about general elfish gloom. Lord Biro, for instance, provided a bitter denunciation of our government commencing:



Ruth Dudley Edwards

Land of Purgatory!
Home of BSE,
scoff your Sunday dinner
laced with CJD.

And Andrew Belsey, creaking under the weight of exam boards, contributed a twoliner called "What Feelgood Factor?"

June has come and with it summer, yet I'm feeling even glummer.

There is nothing for it but to have a limerick competition with a bottle of pink champagne as the prize. I am squatting here only until Friday, so please let me have conclusions to "The chief delectation of summer" by post at the *Independent* tomorrow, or by fax to me at home at 0181-932 4829 by Wednesday night.

In my final column last December, I appealed for suitable names for my friend Gordon Lee's artificial leg. When they came in, I sent all the responses to a delighted Gordon, who is anxious that they should now be offered to oth-

ers in need. Suggestions include Patricia Dawson's "Long John", Maeve Friel's "Gordon's djinn" ("being of an order of spirits lower than the angels and capable of assuming human form"), William Hazell's "Ethelred the Unsteady" and Julia Macfarlane's "Galahad" or "Robin" ("two great leg-ends").

In the end, being a rugged individualist, Gordon named his own part: leg No 1 was known as Clump; its successor incorporated Gordon's initials and is "Clump". Both man and leg are doing well.

I purchased five postcards at the Institute of Contemporary Arts with a view to bringing you up-to-date throughout this week with what is amusing the avant garde. Today's - headed "NEW LABOUR PLC" - shows a cross-looking woman saying "God, these beggars are just so offensive when one is trying to shop." "Never mind, darling," responds her partner. "The new Labour Party will soon clear the streets of the homeless so we can consume in a guilt-free environment."

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Marital breakdown is a fact of life. Accept it

We are a nation of hypocrites when it comes to divorce. We should greet the removal of 'fault' as a rare liberal milestone

Today the Family Law Bill will finally complete its passage through Parliament. Encrusted with an assortment of barnacle-like amendments, this leaky ship will limp into port this evening. Yet its fundamental principle remains intact. It kills the concept of fault in divorce.

Today will be looked back on as an iconic moment – the day they took shame out of divorce. Social historians will use this convenient date to mark a milestone in changing public attitudes. This is why the Tory right have rebelled in such spectacular fashion. They are right to mark the symbolism of this day.

What started as a minor technical adjustment has turned into a last-ditch moral battle. Lord Mackay has steered this vessel through battery from left and right. On and on he has sailed, pretending this is not a liberal measure on the grounds that for nine out of 10 couples divorce will now take longer. New figures show that currently 40 per cent of divorcing couples complete the process in six months, 80 per cent within a year. Under the new law it will take every-one 21 months.

The new law will also require

more of divorcing couples, prodding them away from damaging and expensive litigation towards mediation – which the Lord Chancellor has sometimes conveniently misrepresented as a way of keeping couples together. Lord Mackay keeps intoning his mantra – this will make divorce harder and slower, not easier.

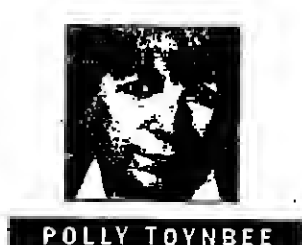
Divorce may take longer, but in one respect the moral critics of this Bill are right: this law is far more than the sum of its parts. It is a symbol of our changed times. A peculiar symbol since it has all been an extraordinary legislative mistake. The Government, like time-share suckers, didn't know what it was signing up to. How easily it was bamboozled by the lawyers' talk of small technical tidying up procedures. It certainly did not read the small print that, by removing the notion of fault, has turned this into one of the few liberal milestones of a reactionary era.

This is a devilish death-blow to the institution of marriage, say the Tory rebels. If there is no sanction in divorce, what is marriage worth? It is already an easier contract to break than a car-hire agreement or renting a television. If you can behave as

badly as you like and never feel the blame, if you can do monstrous injustice to your partner and yet go unchallenged by the law, what hope of marriage retaining any useful meaning whatever?

But what they can't see is that this is law just about catching up with the way people behave. Right-wing social engineers imagine the law can bludgeon people into living and loving differently. It can't. This time, as you see couples tripping into their white wedding cars, remember that more than half of them will divorce: no law is ever going to be able to stop them falling out of love and leaving home. There can scarcely be a person (common or Royal) in the land who has not had divorce or periods of single parenthood somewhere within their extended family. What sense can you make of a law that prohibits one partner 'guilty' in all those failed marriages?

Divorce law has become a perfect example of a law abused and mocked. At the moment, couples can get a divorce after two years' separation if both are agreed. But they can get an instant divorce if one of them claims unreasonable behaviour or adultery. Some three-quarters



POLLY TOYNEE

Change has been too fast for public attitudes to catch up, but they will.

ters of couples opt for the quick route, and those with children do so more than those without. This process often adds to the ill-will between them.

It has long been the practice for these cases not to be contested. However, wronged one partner might feel by being accused of unreasonable behaviour, lawyers would sensibly advise them that there was no point at all in wasting money fighting it. One way or another, they would be divorced willy-nilly. Judges rubber-stamped the allegations and few partners

ever had the satisfaction of their day in court denouncing the iniquities of their spouse, or defending themselves against trumped-up charges.

Long ago judges realised it would take more than the wisdom of Solomon to seek out the roots of discord in a marriage. Sitting up there on their benches, what were they to make of the quarrels played out before them?

She abandoned the marital home for her lover so He claimed She was to blame. She counter-claimed that He was a drunken monster and a philanderer to boot. He said he was driven to drink and into the arms of kinder women by Her outrageous temper – and on and on it went, wasting the court's time to no useful conclusion, beyond the obvious fact that somehow or another this marriage was at an end. Friends take sides and earnestly discuss between themselves which one was really to blame, and there are as many different opinions as there are observers of the marriage.

The bitterness is usually terrible and according to the London Marriage Guidance Council, one partner is nearly always left much angrier and more distressed than the other. Amica-

lity divorces are few and far between. The new law is designed to encourage mediation and reduce the acrimony, persuading divorcing couples to behave better, especially in front of their children. But only Utopians would imagine that even the most divinely inspired legislation would have much effect on how embittered people feel.

Widespread divorce signals profound social change. Its speed has left many people full of breathless social anxiety. What will become of us once society's 'fundamental building block' has tumbled down? Each divorce viewed close up has its reasons. But when people contemplate the big picture and the national figures, this of social panic ensue. There is plenty to worry about – not least a rising social security bill paying for children unsupported by fathers. We have failed to deal with the problems partly because policy-makers have expended too much energy on trying to turn the clock back, instead of dealing with social circumstances as they are.

We are left with a disjunction between what people do and what they say they believe should be. Public opinion is

out of kilter with public behaviour and the result is a kind of national hypocrisy. Like reading Noddy books for comfort, the public wants newspapers that pretend we still live in a cosy world, with everyone tucked up in the right bed. People seem to want 'values' expounded that they have no much intention of abiding by themselves. Change has been too fast for public attitudes to catch up, but they will. And this divorce Bill will be seen in later years as a moment when some of that double-think was ditched.

For the time being, the cheap press, whether the *Daily Mail* or the even cheaper *Times*, will certainly not abandon the concept of fault in divorce – if that we can be certain. Prurient newspapers will go on making high-handed judgements where Solomon fears to tread.

They will go on taking sides in order to victimise. The tale of the guilty party is just too good, embellished as it always must be with half truths and one-sided stories. Even when the concept of fault has been removed from the law, the cheap press will continue to relish its role as divorce court judge and jury – as I have learnt to my cost in the past 10 days.

No bomb will shake my city's resolve

Manchester is shocked but not beaten by Saturday's bomb, writes Patrick Karney

To be honest, the bomb is a serious blow to Manchester. We have been trying for some years now to position ourselves in the European market as a European city by publishing our success as a trading and entertainment centre, and using sports and arts to improve the image of Manchester. It was all set to come together this weekend, with a carnival to accompany the Euro 96 match between Germany and Russia.

The city was filled with German and Russian visitors on Saturday night, and the evening should have been one of the most exciting in years. Instead, when I walked through the city that night, it was just dead and soulless. Now we have thousands of shocked and confused tourists – some of whom have been shut out of their accommodation – who had just come to Manchester for a good time. Of course it could have been so much worse. I live a few hundred yards from where the bomb was placed, and I saw the smoke and glass go up. There could so easily have been hundreds dead, as the bomb was left unattended in one of the busiest parts of the city. Personally, I cannot believe that they left it where they did. These cowardly barbarians should rot in hell for what they have done.

The IRA may try to save their consciences by saying they give notice of these bombs, but anyone could have learnt against that van and triggered an explosion while the streets were full. In any case, it is only because we had hundreds of extra police on duty to cope with Euro 96 that there was the manpower available to evacuate people as quickly as was done.

For lots of families, it will take a long time for this trauma and stress to depart. People are quite sad now, and we know that there is going to be a serious drop of confidence in the city – and in other British cities, too – among those who shop, live and visit here. But Manchester will bounce back. The challenge is to rebuild confidence in the city, and we will put the building blocks in place to meet that challenge.

The writer is chairman of the City Centre Committee of Manchester City Council.

Power to the pedestrian

A new report suggests that by slowing cars down, we can all get about more quickly and safely. Christian Wolmar explains

As we prepare ourselves to face the holiday traffic jams, made worse by the sunny weather, an engaging and radical thought comes from the Institute of Policy Studies. The authors of a new book, *Speed Control and Transport Policy*, suggest it may be faster to go slower. It is not as illogical as it sounds. Already this idea has been accepted by the Department of Transport in relation to motorways. The busiest part of the M25 has been fitted with devices that can vary the speed limit so that when the road is particularly busy it is reduced from 70mph to 60 or 55. And hey presto, more cars are able to use it, as the stop-start effect of people speeding up and then being forced to brake is dissipated. Other motorways are being similarly fitted with these signs.

The PSI pair, Stephen Plowden and Mayer Hillman, go further by suggesting that the effect could also work in urban areas. Researchers in Växjö, Sweden, found that the traffic flowed more smoothly at junctions when the speed limit was reduced because there was less stopping and starting. Moreover, any time lost by some motorists would be partially made up by pedestrians gaining time as crossing roads became easier and involved fewer detours – in general, one person's lost time is another person's gain. For years, that equation has been weighted in favour of the motorist rather than the pedestrian. Indeed, in the cost-benefit calculations used to assess the value of road schemes, the time saved by motorists is assigned a value of around

£7 per hour. But pedestrians' extra time is not counted as a disbenefit. That is why we have those ridiculous bridges over some dual carriageways where pedestrians are supposed to spend five minutes walking up spiral staircases to a height of 30 feet or more, simply to cross a road.

During the long rise and rise of the motor car, society lost its sense of proportion. Rather than being a means to an end – easier travel – cars became the centrepiece of transport policy.

By changing the hierarchy between cars and pedestrians we can transform urban society

The space in towns was turned around to accommodate the motor car rather than the people in them. One-way systems were created to speed it along its way, while other road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, were designed out of large swathes of urban areas. Barriers were erected to hem pedestrians in; traffic lights were installed to allow them to cross the road only for a few seconds every couple of minutes and high streets were turned into urban clearways as traffic was given priority at every opportunity. Speed became an end in itself. Little thought was given to the downsides, not only the casualties, but the degradation of the environment caused by fast cars. The PSI book argues that it is time

to reconsider this set of priorities. Instead of allowing cars to whizz about unfettered around towns, the authors suggest a speed limit of 20mph or 15mph. Outside towns, the authors want to see a 55mph speed limit as the most optimal between reducing the casualty rate and ensuring that road transport is still economic. The limits would all be enforced by speed limiters, similar to those fitted to lorries and coaches, which could be set to different speeds in towns or outside.

The benefits from much-reduced speed limits in residential areas are enormous. People, particularly the old and the young, would be freed to reclaim the streets. No longer would anxious parents have to accompany their children to school, old ladies would be able to walk to the shops again and children would be able to play in the streets safely. As a result of the streets becoming more used by people, crime would fall and communities would be revived.

Outside towns, the benefits are mostly in the form of reduced road casualties, but there would be environmental gains, too, through reduced fuel consumption. Plowden and Hillman deny that they are being idealistic or outlandish. They are not suggesting that some people will not still resort to their cars even for ridiculously short trips to the shops. They accept that cars will remain an integral part of society's desire for mobility. But just by changing the hierarchy between cars and pedestrians, which has evolved without thought or debate, urban society will be transformed.



In answer to suggestions that all these ideas are merely the musings of radical transport planners, Mr Plowden replies: "Things are changing. Only a few years ago, walking and cycling were at the bottom of transport priorities. Now it is accepted that they should be at the centre of any transport policy." He adds that public opinion is ahead of the views of politicians in realising that the current use of cars was unsustainable. Many people involved in transport policy-making already support views similar to those of the authors.

Experience from towns such as York, where these ideas have been put into effect, suggest that after initial

antipathy they become very popular. In York, the hierarchy of transport has been turned round, giving pride of place to pedestrians and cyclists, followed by public transport, and finally the individual car.

Indeed, visitors from abroad frequently comment on how traffic has been able to dominate the urban environment in most of our cities in a way that is now unthinkable in the cities of Holland or Germany. There is nothing to lose except our obsession with the car.

'Speed Control and Transport Policy' by Mayer Hillman and Stephen Plowden, published by the Policy Studies Institute, £14.95.

Southwark: eight small projects, one big vision

The anticipated arrival of the new Tate Gallery has sparked a novel plan for improving public spaces

The London borough of Southwark is carrying out an experiment in improving its streets and public space. It is turning away from the big undertaking and embracing step-by-step improvement. There is declining enthusiasm for wholesale demolition to build big leisure centres, huge shopping malls and new roads in between. Having used them, we can see that they were too often based upon wrong assumptions about economic growth and about our wants and needs. Southwark's new approach, if it succeeds, could be enormously influential.

Southwark's most revolutionary decision may be to have dispensed with a master plan. Instead it has invited eight design teams to make proposals for different parts of the borough. There is no lead designer. Each team starts with what exists in the area it has been allocated.

And these starting points are a fascinating mixture of ancient streets, Victorian brutalism and 20th century blandness. Southwark was once the entertainment district of London. Across the Thames via London Bridge, beyond the control of the City authorities, there were dozens of rowdy inns, women of the 'stews' or brothels, bowling, bear baiting, gambling and theatres like the Globe.

After the priories were dissolved and the theatres and bears gardens demolished, Southwark settled down into an area of wharves and warehouses, brewing, engineering, small-scale industry and craft workers.

Dickens' parents were in the Marshalsea Debtors Prison and the great novelist's first job was in a Southwark blacking factory at the age of 12 years. The old inns described in *Pickwick Papers* were in the High Street. Then came the railways, pushed through Southwark with so little regard for what lay in their paths that the Waterloo to London Bridge line almost touches Southwark Cathedral. They were followed in later decades by commercial property developers who erected cheap office accommodation. Today the authentic scene in old Southwark is a vast railway viaduct with multifarious activities conducted under the arches, surrounded by 20th century commercial and light industrial property still more or less aligned with the medieval street plan.

The trigger for Southwark's initiative is the arrival in the borough shortly of the Tate Gallery of Modern Art. From every point of view but one, Art. From every point of view but one, this is a big project, expected to attract three million visitors each year. The exception is the building itself. It is not



ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

a new structure. It is the old Bankside power station. While it is being modified to accommodate pictures rather than turbines, its past will not be disguised. This same approach is to be taken by the eight design teams. They cannot propose clearing an area and starting again. They are asked to analyse what already exists and suggest modifications. They are required to give priority to public transport and pedestrian access over cars, to find ways of making public spaces safer and to improve the look of them. And they must consult local residents and workers thoroughly and regularly.

The plans are now being exhibited in Southwark Street for the next five weeks in a converted car-wash building. A common feature is opening up views – across the river to the Tower or even via a giant angled mirror

towards Southwark Cathedral. Another is re-working the railway viaducts. One proposal is to suspend them from pylons so that the space underneath can be properly used. The design teams have also thought a lot about creating new pedestrian routes. For instance, it is suggested that a new walkway, described as a canopy of lights, should be driven right through the middle of a large, exceedingly boring 1950s-style office block due to be demolished in a few years.

Most of all, I like the schemes for individual streets. The robustness and diversity of the average busy street, with its mixture of offices, shops, pubs, cinemas as well as remnants of the past in the shape of bits of wall, pavement, elaborate door frame, cobble entrance and so on are preserved. The design improvements start with street furniture, lighting and signage. This is applying tender loving care to the street. During this process it finally becomes clear what is truly tatty and ugly and beyond treatment – and for which replacement may be the best answer.

This shifting of the debate about the right way to improve our cities is a sign of the times. The difficulty of finding a striking way to mark the Millennium is a further example of this. We would rather spend time and money on

improving the intricate mechanisms of daily life than on doing something monumental. Some time ago, I took part in a well-organised series of discussions whose purpose was to identify and carry forward a suitably bold initiative. We examined numerous suggestions, but nothing convincing emerged. Now most of us, surely, would be relieved if the proposed Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich in London didn't take place. Local people would care because the development would create a lot of jobs and bring much business to the borough. But the rest of us?

The truth is that we are much less interested than we were in grand projects such as those President Mitterrand carried out in Paris during the 1980s which caused so much envy on this side of the Channel. In any case we have not always been successful in doing them. Both the new British Library building and the enlargement of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden are cases in point. These ambitious concepts have often appeared to be collapsing under their own weight. The characteristic British preference for pragmatic solutions is reasserting itself. That is why Southwark's experiment in *petits projets* deserves notice.

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ward Banner QC, Guy Vickers (Solicitor, McCarthy & Stone) for the appellants; Nicholas Riddle, Nicholas Jackson (Helds, Southampton) for the respondents.

صبرنا من الازل

DEREK PAIN



There should also be a statement from Railtrack, the latest privatisation recruit. It should merely confirm profits are around the £190m signalled in the April prospectus.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Maverick trader's secret book details £13bn copper fraud

JOHN WILLCOCK

The rogue copper trader who cost Japan's Sumitomo Corporation £1.2bn may have carried out unauthorised trades in the metal of up to a staggering two trillion yen (£1.3bn) a year.

Sumitomo's president, Tomiichi Akiyama, told the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* that the trader Yasuo Hamanaka kept track of his unauthorised deals over 10 years in a secret under-the-counter book that only he knew about.

Authorities in Japan, Britain and the United States are set to widen their investigations this week into how the scandal went unnoticed for 10 years, while world copper traders are braced for a hectic ride as markets reopen today.

The market's main uncertainty is how Sumitomo, the world's biggest copper trader, plans to extricate itself from the long positions Mr Hamanaka has locked the company into.

In the UK the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has said it is widening its investigation to cover anyone connected with the fraud.

Earlier this year the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the City regulator, conducted an investigation into Winchester Commodities, a UK copper broker which has made huge returns from the business. Winchester's two largest shareholders, Ashley Levitt and Charlie Vincent, are now based in Monaco.

Pressure on the London Metal Exchange is expected to increase this week as it emerged that it was alerted as early as 1991 to irregularities in copper trading by Hamanaka. The rogue trader asked a metals broker in October 1991 to confirm details of his trades, some of which were fictitious. The broker, David Threlkeld, declined and brought the request to the attention of the LME.

"The LME was aware of this in 1991," Mr Threlkeld told journalists on Saturday.

Agencies in the United States, Britain and Japan are urgently trying to discover whether Tokyo's "Mister Five Per Cent" was a one-off maverick, or whether they have stumbled on a plot to rig the price of the world's flagship industrial metal.

If accomplices in any unlawful activity are found, vowed David King, chief executive of the London Metal Exchange (LME), "we will hang them high and publicly".

The main traders in the copper market expect further wild fluctuations in the metal's price as Sumitomo sorts out its positions. Mr King commented yesterday: "I am confident that the situation can be resolved in a satisfactory manner without causing disruption in the marketplace."

The Securities and Investments Board (SIB), London's senior market regulator, has been supervising the SFA's in-

vestigations into the copper market. The SIB has also been investigating the trade in copper in liaison with the US Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC).

Enquiries may be redoubled into the scandal that hit Chile's state copper giant Codelco in 1995 when it lost \$170m on unauthorised LME trading. Its top dealer has denied fraud charges.

Mr Akiyama, referring to Hamanaka's secret book, said it recorded trades which were about twice the amount a year shown in official paperwork Mr Hamanaka processed for the company.

Sumitomo's annual copper trading volume in 1995 was \$9.4 bn, the *Asahi Shimbun* said.

Mr Akiyama said Sumitomo only learned of what was going on when Hamanaka confessed on 5 June to his rogue trading and showed company officials the secret book. Mr Akiyama said the trader was able to get away with his unauthorised dealings for so long because papers from banks he used in his trading transactions, which should have been sent to the company's financial department, were instead sent directly to Mr Hamanaka.

The company was only fully alerted to Mr Hamanaka's activities when bank documents meant for the trader were mistakenly sent to the company's financial department, the *Asahi* said.



Recommended reading: Tomiichi Akiyama, president of Sumitomo, said Hamanaka (above) documented in his book twice the number of transactions recorded in the official paperwork

Red or Dead and Sock Shop find buyers

JOHN WILLCOCK and NIC CICUTTI

Sock Shop, Red or Dead and Contessa, three subsidiaries to the failed Facia stores group, have been sold by receivers, helping to save more than 1,000 jobs.

The sales, announced yesterday, follow a separate purchase by Carlton International, the luggage manufacturer, of branches of Salsbury's, another part of Facia's former empire.

About 75 outlets in the Sock Shop chain, employing 500 staff, are being sold for a "substantial" but undisclosed sum to Jumper, a UK retail chain based in Carnforth, Lancashire. About a dozen shops were not included in the sale.

Red or Dead, one of the UK's leading fashion chains, has been sold back to its founders and former owners, Wayne and Germaine Hemmingsway, preserving more than 100 jobs.

Contessa, the UK's largest specialist lingerie retailer, is being acquired by Chancerealm Group, owned by Theo Phaphitis. The deal safeguards some 400 jobs in 80 of the 120 outlets being sold.

Fifteen months ago Mr Phaphitis bought the Ryman stationery chain from KPMG, which was acting as receivers to the failed Pentos Group.

Tony Thompson, of accountants KPMG, lead receiver to Facia, said: "We have kept the stores open in the belief that this was vital to preserving the businesses. We have now been able

to sell the bulk of the Facia stores in receivership and thereby save nearly 1,000 jobs.

"We only finished the negotiations late on Saturday evening after a long day of talks. We are very pleased to have saved so many jobs and preserve such well-known High Street names."

Follow receiver Grant Thornton said on Saturday that Carlton International had bought 52 branches of the Salsbury's handbag, costume jewellery and suitcase chain for an undisclosed sum.

KPMG said that the purchase - a week after Swiss-based Mister Minit snapped up 39 stores - brought the total number of Salsbury's shops sold to 91, with Grant Thornton still seeking buyers for around 80 more.

Grant Thornton said it understood that Carlton International intended to keep all 300 staff in the shops concerned, along with the Salsbury's name.

Grant Thornton partner Maurice Withall said: "We still have a number of offers of interest in the remaining stores and we will be entering into discussions with the interested parties next week."

Mr Thompson added that KPMG expected to sell Oakland, the men's fashionwear chain, by the middle of this week and also hoped to find a buyer for Torq, the jewellery business.

"We have now sold the bulk of the Facia Group retail outlets and it appears likely that secured creditors will be paid in full," he said.

Hollick opens up heart of the 'Express'

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Lord Hollick, chief executive of United News & Media has decreed an "open-plan" office on the eighth floor of United's Blackfriars headquarters, although the Labour peer has kept a private office for himself.

The new layout is aimed at creating what one insider calls an "open and accessible environment" at United, reminiscent of the offices of the old MAI, Lord Hollick's media and financial services company, which earlier this year merged with United.

Significantly, Lord Stevens, United's chairman, remains in his palatial office on the ninth floor, fuelling speculation that the Tory peer is no longer calling the shots at United, owners of the Express titles and a conference division.

The new arrangements strike some insiders as the confirmation of Lord Hollick's growing power at United, and the increasing isolation of the Lord Stevens, who ran the newspaper group for 15 years.

Within the management area, which takes up half the eighth floor, executives are free to roam, and have access to all areas save the private offices of Lord Hollick and his senior staff. However, there is what one insider calls a "ring of steel" around the open area, as a way of securing confidential documents.

It was within this space that United's highly secretive plans to bid for the television rights to the Premier League were finalised. The project, which included a proposal to offer a range of digital television

services, has now been shelved, following the deal reached between the league and BSkyB earlier this month.

Says a senior United executive: "There are really two theories about security and confidentiality. Some companies just lock all confidential material in safe in the chief executive's office. We prefer to have a more open environment, at least for the senior people."

Beyond its significance as an indication of relations between the two peers, the open-plan concept is at the heart of a raging debate in management consultancy circles about corporate efficiency. According to one school, much influenced by US experience, the open plan encourages more communication, a flatter, more efficient management structure and less friction between various layers of management. Other experts argue, however, that executives need private space in order to concentrate.

One US advertising agency has no private offices at all - nor even any desks. Staff are equipped with lightweight portable phones, and can make use of couches and tables spread out in the open space.

Media companies in the UK are more likely than most to have an open-plan environment - influenced, perhaps, by the layout of most newspapers, where only the very senior staff have private offices. Capital Radio, which is moving from its cramped headquarters in Euston Road to Leicester Square, is considering using an open-plan system, at least for most managers. But Chrysalis, for instance, which owns radio station Heart 102, has stuck with the traditional layout.

Insurers demand controls on long-term care sales

NIC CICUTTI

Insurers preparing for a £10bn boom in sales of long-term care policies to the elderly are set to confound the Government by opposing its plans not to impose tight regulation on the industry.

Despite claims by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Minister, that controls would "inhibit innovation and the development of new products", insurers said yesterday they wanted long-term care to be brought under the Financial Services Act.

The Association of British Insurers, which had previously opposed tougher regulation, is due to issue its own proposals this week.

A spokesman said yesterday: "We have decided that the sale of such products should be controlled under the FSA."

David Robinson, head of sales and marketing at Scottish Provident, said: "We believe strongly that the public must be reassured that legislation governing any form of partnership arrangement [between the Government and insurers] has

been thought out thoroughly before it is introduced." He added that selling of such plans should be regulated by the Personal Investment Authority, the financial watchdog.

Legal & General and Prudential, two of Britain's leading insurers, also said they were in favour of effective regulation of the market.

Research by Munich Re, a leading insurer, said last month that the market for long-term care products could be worth up to £10bn a year. Sales of home-income plans,

where homeowners surrender part of the equity in their home in return for a guaranteed income in old age, could be worth up to £100bn, some estimates suggest.

The insurers' initiative in calling for tough regulation is aimed at preventing a repeat of the pensions scandal, in which 1.5 million people were wrongly advised to buy a personal pension.

The proposal to boost the merits of private cover follows increasing anger among many elderly people and their chil-

dren that they are being forced to sell off their only assets to fund the costs of care.

Last month, Mr Dorrell issued a consultation paper, in which the Department of Health proposes that for each £1-worth of cover bought by a policyholder, local authorities will disregard £1.50 of assets when means-testing elderly people for long-term care.

When added to the £10,000 in assets disregarded by the authority when means-testing individuals, a one-off premium of £7,000 might allow a person

to protect a house worth £60,000 from having to be sold before the council has to help out.

However, the Government said last month that it felt there was little need to regulate the new industry because this was likely to stifle innovation and competition.

Consumer groups have argued that without controls on how they are sold, long-term care policies could be targeted at vulnerable people, who may be frightened into taking out the wrong plan.

Barings boss offered new job

JOHN WILLCOCK

Andrew Tuckey, deputy chairman of Barings when it crashed last year, is being asked to head up the investment banking arm of Credit Lyonnais.

Jean Peyrelade, chairman of the French bank and a close

friend of Tuckey, is keen to hire the corporate financier to spearhead Credit Lyonnais Capital Markets' expansion in London.

It is unclear whether Tuckey is willing to take the job - he was not available for comment yesterday - and it is also unclear how his banking peers would re-

gard the move if he did. Mr Tuckey was the only senior Barings executive to escape censure by the regulators when the bank collapsed with £830m losses due to Nick Leeson's unauthorised trading.

He is also the only top Barings executive who has not been

handed from taking another job in the City. One former colleague said yesterday: "It might be better for Barings if he left," adding that the bank wanted to put the whole Leeson episode behind it.

Mr Tuckey, who now works as a consultant to ING Barings, still has his fangs inside the bank and out. Brian Pitman, the chairman of Lloyds TSB, was keen for him to advise on the acquisition of TSB last year, as he had done on the Cheltenham & Gloucester bid before.

IN BRIEF

- Water consumers are effectively being taxed by over-investment in quality improvements ordered by the water watchdog, the Institute of Economic Affairs and London Business School claim today in their annual review of utilities regulation. The IEA also said that the pursuit of "social objectives" by Ofwat was superfluous and counter-productive, while there was a danger that gains from privatisation could be eroded in the electricity industry by "re-politicisation" of the sector.
- Failure rates among franchise firms could be as high as 64 per cent over a decade, according to a study by the Small Business Research Trust out today. Despite claims of failure rates of 20 per cent, the survey found that of 1,568 firms which advertised franchise opportunities from 1984 onwards, just 36 per cent were still in business by the end of 1995. Failure rates ranged between 25 per cent for healthcare and 57 per cent for hotel and catering.
- Almost seven small business owners out of 10 (69 per cent) wish they could work fewer hours, while 63 per cent are worried about the lack of time they spent with their families, according to a survey of 1,000 business owners by NOP, the research firm. Self-employed entrepreneurs worked an average of 58 hours, and one third hoped to become millionaires. Despite saying that they had little time to enjoy the fruits of their labours, six out of 10 respondents are not prepared to take a drop in income to work shorter hours, NOP found.
- UK truck production is set to dip this year and fall further in 1997 and 1998, according to a world-truck industry forecast from financial information company DRU/McGraw Hill. Sales of UK trucks above six tonnes are also set to fall from 1996/98 before rising again by the year 2001. UK truck production figure for 1995 was 24,700. But this figure will fall back to 23,900 in 1996; 22,700 in 1997; and 21,600 in 1998 before rising slightly to 23,100 in 2001, reflecting the state of the UK economy.
- Managers' pay has leapt ahead of inflation over the past three months with average rises of 4 per cent, according to a report by pay analysts Incomes Data Services out today. A survey of 175 deals in private companies showed that average increases jumped from 3.5 per cent a year ago to 4 per cent, well ahead of the inflation rate. Fewer than one in 10 firms gave managers rises at or below the inflation rate.
- Only 9 per cent of office staff work from home more than once a week, and fewer than one in five wants to operate from home on a regular basis, a survey by international property consultants Hazley & Baker says today. The survey of 650 office workers shows that the number of home-workers has not increased much over the last few years.
- The UK's labour costs have continued to fall even though Europe's competitiveness in the world labour market is in decline, a new report shows today. Social security and other mandatory benefits are up to three times higher in Europe than in the US, says Sedgwick Noble Lowndes says today. But the UK is now the EU's second most competitive country behind Portugal, compared with sixth in 1993, following reductions in pay and benefit costs adjusted to the cost of living.
- Revival in the commercial property market, with firms gearing up for a pick-up in the pace of economic activity, was detected today by a report from the Confederation of British Industry and international property advisers Grimley. A total of 28 per cent of companies expected to increase their property holdings over the next six months while 25 per cent anticipated a reduction.



New horizons: Andrew Tuckey, the only senior Barings executive at the time of the collapse not to have been banned in the City, still has supporters inside and outside the bank

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Change %	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD %		
FTSE 100	3753.50		+48.8	+1.3	3857.10	3639.50	4.04		
FTSE 250	4464.60		+18.6	+0.4	4568.60	4015.30	3.38		
FTSE 350	1898.20		+20.1	+1.1	1945.40	1816.60	3.89		
FT Small Cap	2238.97		+0.5	+0.0	2244.36	1954.06	2.92		
FT All Share	1884.58		+18.4	+1.0	1924.17	1791.96	3.82		
New York	5649.48		-47.6	-0.8	5778.00	5032.94	2.16		
Tokyo	22289.38		+537.8	+2.5	22289.38	19734.70	0.721		
Hong Kong	10864.98		-331.6	-3.0	11594.99	10204.87	3.391		
Frankfurt	2548.83		-8.6	-0.3	2570.78	2253.36	1.831		

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
	Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	5.72	6.13	6.11	6.20	6.22	6.25			
US	5.44	6.09	6.01	6.21	7.11	6.62			
Japan	0.38	0.37	3.20	2.95					
Germany	3.34	3.53	3.65	3.79	7.24				

CURRENCIES									
Money Market Rates									
	Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
US	1.5370	-0.47c	1.5645	0.8606	+0.20	0.630			
£ (London)	1.5360	-0.50c	1.5665	0.8510	+0.21	0.630			
DM (London)	2.2405	-2.51p	2.425	1.8229	-1.16p	1.55			
¥ (London)	167.105	+1.01p	166.02	108.725	+0.225	96.77			
€ Index	85.6	-0.7	85.5	97.1	-0.3	96.1			

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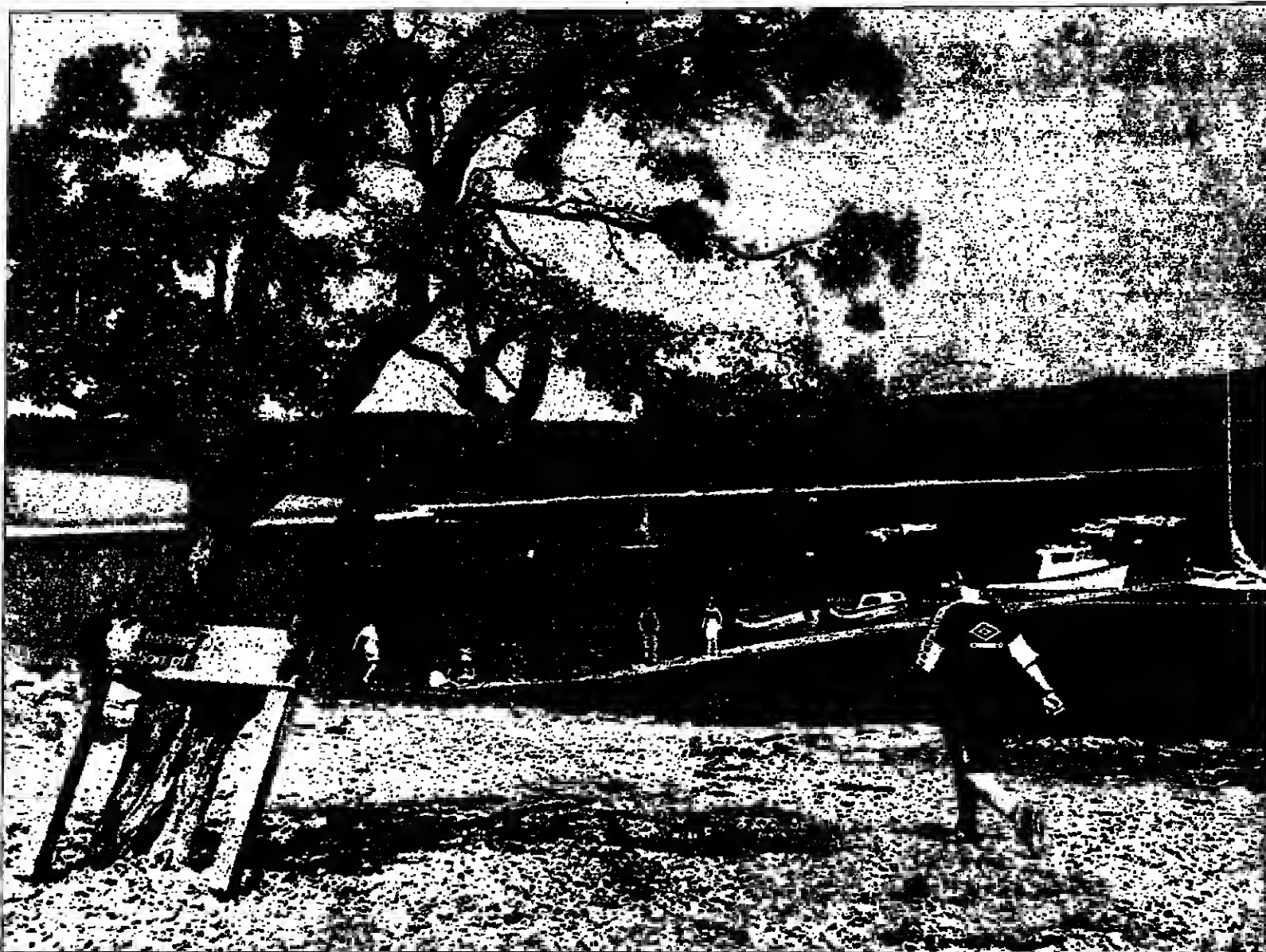
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Kielder Water, the largest reservoir in Europe, which supplements rivers around Northumbria

Photograph: Tom Finnie/North News

Many rivers to cross

Using reservoirs to supplement rivers is now a necessity. But what is the environmental impact of water that has travelled in several river systems? Martyn Kelly reports

Last summer, the people of north-east England saw a white elephant finally change into a useful beast of burden. While their neighbours to the south and west – not to mention most of central and southern England – suffered drought orders, the laws of Northumbria remained lush and green. The reason? Kielder Water, a large reservoir in Europe, plus a pipeline that enables water from Kielder to be pumped to rivers in the region.

"At the time it was completed it was seen as a white elephant because the industrial expansion of Teesside, whose demand it was built to meet, never materialised," explains Andrew Panting of Northumbria Water. "I think it is fair to say that for the first eight years, through to about 1990, it wasn't used a great deal. Since then it has really come into its own, being used more each year than the previous one, to the point at which last year it was playing a vital role in keeping the rivers Tyne, Derwent and Wear topped up. If we hadn't had Kielder Water then, the situation in the North-east would have been potentially worse than that in Yorkshire."

Even at the end of the summer, Kielder Water, with a capacity of 200 billion litres, was still almost 80 per cent full. This compared with only 11 per cent

in some of the worst affected reservoirs of West Yorkshire.

Not surprisingly, then, Yorkshire Water spent much of last summer casting wistful glances towards their friends in the North. They spent £27m bringing in tankerloads of water – 300 a day at the peak – from Teesside. This year they plan to go one step further by building a permanent pipeline to take water from the River Tyne, near Darlington, 13km to the river Wiske, a tributary of the Swale. From there it will flow down the rivers Swale, Ure and Ouse and through another 23km of new pipes to a water treatment centre near York before arriving in the Yorkshire water mains.

By the time the water arrives in York it will have travelled in three separate river systems: the North Tyne, Tees and Swale-Ouse. Working out exactly what impact this will have on each river is not easy. "There has been remarkably little written on water transfers," comments Chris Gibbons of the University of Northumbria, who recently completed a PhD on the ecological effects of the Kielder scheme. "There seem to be a lot of hurried proposals for transfers now and next to no pre-impact studies at all."

Generalisations about the effect of transfers are difficult. "It all depends upon the differences between the donor system and the receiving system," Gibbons explains. His own studies

showed that the effects of releases of Kielder water on the River Wear were slight because the two rivers are, chemically, very similar. "The water quality issues are more related to the sorts of changes that occur within the transfer tunnel," he explains. "Quite often water stands for a long period of time in the transfer tunnel and, when it is released, it is relatively low in dissolved oxygen."

Deoxygenated water can be fatal for fish and other animals in the river, so it is important that weirs, and other means to re-aerate the water are provided before it enters the river. However, Gibbons goes on to explain that these changes were relatively short-lived in the Wear and had disappeared a few hundred metres downstream of the discharge.

Other problems that need to be taken into account are the transfer of new pests and diseases. Zander, an aggressive, alien fish, loaded by coarse fishermen, was able to spread through an earlier scheme that linked rivers in East Anglia. And, in 1989, a chemical spill in the River Tyne was accidentally transferred, thanks to the Kielder Scheme, to other rivers – and water-treatment works – in the region and about 100,000 households were supplied with drinking water that had a distinct odour of TCE.

Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency are both

quick to point out that plans to transfer water between the Tees and the Wiske (and, consequently, for the Tees to be supplemented by Kielder) are only likely to be used in an emergency. However, the greater distance between the Tyne and Tees will mean that water spends more time in the pipes and will, potentially, be more severely deoxygenated than is the case for discharges to the Wear. Add to this the potential need for larger volumes of water to be transferred and the impact on the otherwise pristine upper reaches of the Tees could be more serious than Gibbons observed on the Wear.

The next stage of the journey, however, might even have a positive environmental impact. Yorkshire Water will abstract high-quality water from the Tees from a stretch just upstream of Darlington and pump it into a river which, an Environmental Agency spokeswoman commented wryly, leaves a lot to be desired in water-quality terms. The net effect might be an overall improvement in chemical terms, due to dilution of river Wiske water by river Tees water. The ability of a small North Yorkshire stream to cope with such an increase in flow is a question that Environment Agency staff will be asking Yorkshire Water to answer before giving the final go-ahead. A closing irony is that plans to

New suits for old bottles

Forget the scare stories. Phthalates are cheap, versatile, recyclable ... and no risk to humans. By John Emsley

At the beginning of this month, Britain was gripped by fear that substances called phthalates could be contaminating infant formula feeds. The scare was prompted by concerns that these were "gender-bending" chemicals. An earlier phthalate scare of the 1970s accused them of causing cancer. However, phthalates cause neither cancer nor infertility in humans.

Phthalates are man-made and widespread; even in remote regions of the planet analysis have recorded 0.05 parts per million (ppm) in rainwater. Each of us gets a daily dose, and the MAFF surveys Phthalates in Paper & Board Packaging (1995) and Total Diet Survey (1996) found them in almost all food analysed. Levels in milk and milk products were around 1 ppm, but the suspected source of contamination, PVC tubing used in milking parlours, accounts for only a tenth of this.

Phthalates were first made in the 1850s and called naphthalates, from naphtha the ancient Greek name for natural petroleum, but this was soon shortened to phthalate. There are two types, which differ slightly from each other in their chemical structure.

Phthalate polyester was discovered by the chemists Rex Whinfield and James Tennant in Manchester in 1941, when they heated together methyl terephthalate and ethylene glycol. They called their new polymer fibre "terylene" and found it ideal for blending with other fibres to make crease-resistant suits, or, as Crimplene, uncrushable blouses and dresses. Today we are more likely to encounter polyester as PET (polyethylene terephthalate), which is what most fizzy drinks bottles are made of. These are generally regarded as environmentally friendly because they save energy and can be recycled.

A PET bottle needs a quarter less energy to make than a glass bottle and a delivery truck can carry 60 per cent more drink and 80 per cent less packaging when loaded with PET-bottled drinks. In Germany and Austria PET bottles are returned for refilling, while in the US more than 30 per cent are recycled into other products such as carpets, anoraks, duvets and paint brushes. In 1995 in the UK 1,000 tons of PET bottles

were collected to become fibre insulation and yarn.

The phthalate in polyester is permanently fixed as an integral part of the polymer. The other type has a different use – as a molecular lubricant. It is blended into plastics to make them pliable. PVC is a rigid solid used for window frames and drainpipes, but when phthalate is added it becomes flexible because this allows the polymer chains to move over one another. So we get PVC as garden hoses, wallpapers, shower curtains, clothes, blood bags and water beds. Electric cable and vinyl flooring account for most phthalate.

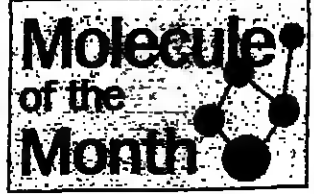
Polyester phthalate does not escape to the environment. Plasticiser phthalates do, and are among the most investigated of all chemicals. The leading plasticiser is DEHP, short for di(ethylhexyl) phthalate, which, according to Dr David Cadogan of the EC Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates, pos-

es little risk. "As far as humans are concerned it causes neither cancer nor reproductive effects. Nor do phthalates accumulate in the environment; they are biodegradable, and levels are falling. Leakage from plastics in old landfill sites is tiny."

In 1990 the EU Commission said DEHP should not be classified as a carcinogen, because no carcinogenic or oestrogenic activity was found with fish, hamsters, guinea-pigs, dogs or monkeys. Rats did show increased risks of liver tumours and decreased testes, but they are known to be particularly prone to these conditions.

Humans are not at risk. The Danish Institute of Toxicology concluded that an intake of 500mg a day was without effect. Our average daily intake is around 0.35mg. For babies, the tolerable daily intake is 105 milligrams per kilogram body weight, but MAFF admits some feeds have 0.13 mg per kg. However, it points out that the 0.05 guideline has a large built-in safety factor and in any case is based on the tests on rats. The danger to human babies is negligible.

Dr John Emsley is science writer in residence at Imperial College, London.



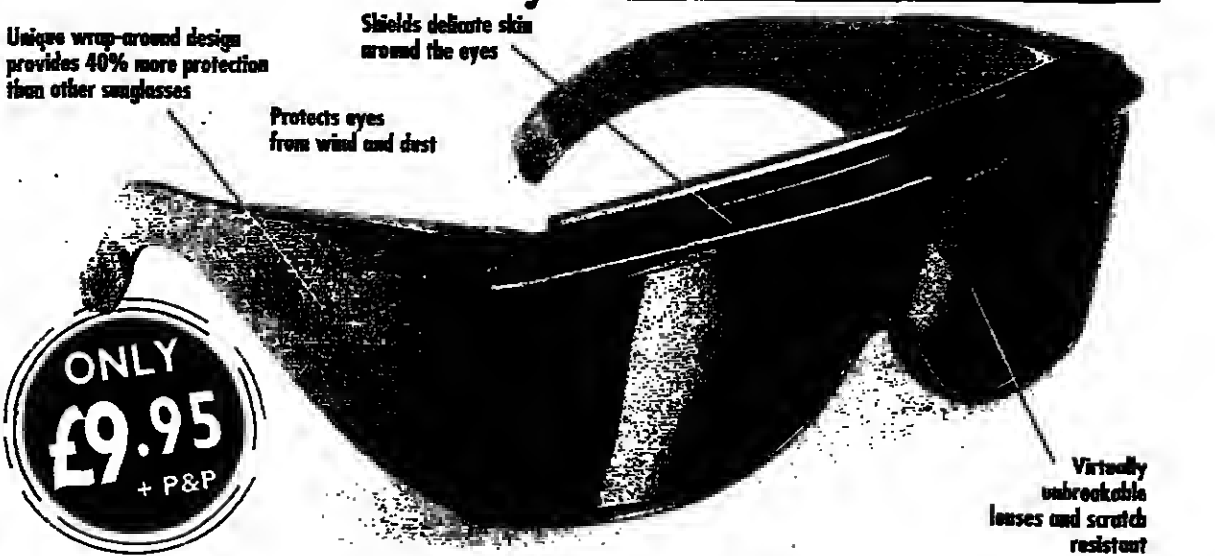
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3916, Monday 17 June By Piers



- ACROSS**
- 1 It's not clear when it comes on (7)
 - 5 Welcome a title, by the sound of it (7)
 - 9 Oil ran out round key aircraft part (7)
 - 10 Transport collection (7)
 - 11 Fire madly, dispersing land force (5,4)
 - 12 Preserve name of a tropical plant (5)
 - 13 Tell public school pupil in advance (3,2)
 - 15 Bullish article inside isn't to be altered (9)
 - 17 Ingredients of a tin goose on duck for starters (9)
 - 19 Done after consideration of turn over (3,2)
 - 22 State from which a victim originates (5)
 - 23 Expression of approval students hope for? (4,5)
 - 25 German prince to return round mid-April (7)
- DOWN**
- 1 Loud reprimand is terrible (7)
 - 2 Good French composer accepting trainees bytest (7)
 - 3 Bitter cold but dry outside (5)
 - 4 Poor writer heads off eager to know (9)
 - 5 Some out of work are suffering (5)
 - 6 Many assigned to writing draft (9)
 - 7 Like to prohibit one entering European country (7)
 - 8 Muddle over time signal (7)
 - 14 Hit spins right off, resulting in medical problem (9)
 - 16 A touch is added to pale feature (9)
 - 17 We hear callous Cockney is unaffected (7)
 - 18 Mainly moderate, good person creates violent agitation (7)
 - 20 Average charge raised by business colleague (7)
 - 21 Staff point to service entrance (7)
 - 23 Attack number involved in brawl (5)
 - 24 Dress up Henry causing laughter (5)

©Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.
and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford.
Monday 17 June 1996 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

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